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THE

B'AR-KILLER:

OR,

THE LONG TRAIL.

BY CAPT. COMSTOCK.

NEW YORK:

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THE B'AR-KILLER.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTURED.

"KER-WHOOP! Thunder and lightnin'! B'ars and cata-
b'ounts!"

The speaker, a stalwart fellow, wearing a bear-skin cap, fringed hunting-shirt and leather leggings, lay sprawling upon the ground in the depths of a Georgian forest.

He evidently had fallen from a tree, and his mouth, while screwed up at one side, as if its owner was determined to hide all show of pain, revealed a set of white teeth seemingly stretched from ear to ear in a ludicrous grin. Half sitting, half reclining, one of his legs was thrown far up, supported by his right hand, his comical countenance being visible beneath.

He was on the point of rising, when from a clump of shrubbery not far off, half a dozen Cherokee Indians, who had probably been tracking the hunter, made their appearance!

Thus caught where resistance was impossible, the hunter seemed determined to make the best of his situation.

"Hello! yer skunks! ain't this a persition? Take my pictur', won't yer?"

Several of the Indians raised their tomahawks, when one, an old chief, interfered.

"English?"

"Thunder, no! I'm Killb'ar, slid from t'other side of the Rocky Mountains on a greased whirlwind, to get rid of Suke Spoon, who are arter me though she knows I are a married man."

He sprung to his feet, when his rifle was taken from him, and his arms carefully secured with thongs of deer-hide.

"Big fall—no hurt!" said the chief, glancing up at the tree.

"I war up thar since midnight, dreaming about Suke, who had jist caught me by the ha'r, when down I comed, restored to conscientiousness. I fell cl'ar from the top o' the tree."

"Lie!" exclaimed the chief—the broken branch not being fifteen feet above their heads.

"Cl'ar from the top, I tell yer! I broke t'other branch on the way, an' all from dreamin' of Suke Spoon. That gal are arter me to marry her, because I paid her some little contentions in the way of helpin' her bile some maple sugar while her daddy war off. Arter that she sweetened up to me, and when I said I didn't want ter marry her, she caught up a gridiron, when I cl'ared the way. She swore she'd foller me, and she'll keep her word, as she are a screamer. I've see'd her cl'ar a fifty-foot tree-top, and heerd her scream ten mile off, because her daddy wouldn't buy her a caliker gown."

"Pale-face talk plenty lie. Here, there, twist round and round like clouds change all time," said the chief, personifying a string of falsehoods as they struck his mind. "Burn lies all up in fire and smoke. How like that? Ugh!"

"Yer may burn my carcass but not my *speerit*, which are *innumerable*. I don't keer a fig fur you, nor fur any other red skunk!"

The Indians had now started.

All round them as they proceeded, sung the sweet birds. The red light of the rising sun wove lines of beauty among the leaves of the pinnated calabash, the chestnut and the melancholy cypress; the fragrance of golden lily, sumac and thorn-apple filled the air.

In less than an hour the party reached the camp.

Among the assembled warriors stood Omoski, the handsomest, bravest, and most expert of his tribe, the son of the old chief Comigo, who had just come in with the prisoner. Not far from the young Indian warrior, watching him askance, was pretty Minniho, the belle of her tribe. She was attired in white deer-skin, which, trimmed with red, became her well matching with the blushing cheek, the shining masses of dark hair, and the soft, black eyes.

"This are a charmin' little gal," remarked Killb'ar. "Thar's a hull bushel of stars in her eyes, and enny amount of luv-light. Ef my heart war as susceptible as it war once, I should

sartinly get entangled like a bull-fish in a net. Thar's Suke Spoon, which thinks herself some, but she kin make no comparative to this 'ere, whose feet, to use a *poultry* (poetic) *compression*, is no bigger than white beans, while Suke's is big as frying-pans, and shakes the 'arth like an oliphant's."

While the other maidens were gathered round the new arrivals, Minniho, unseen by them, slipped into Omoski's hand a string of beautiful amber beads, which she had worked for him as a gift.

The young man bowed, and rather carelessly thrust the present into a pouch at his side, then joined those of his people who had gathered round the prisoner.

"Burn soon," said Comigo; "first see Indian throw tomahawk and knife."

"Ef I'm to be burned, I wish you'd hurry up yer cakes! The pleasures of anticipation ain't very temptin' under present sarcumstances," cried Killb'ar.

The old chief's remark was greeted with applause. There was, on this day, to be a trial of skill with the weapons mentioned.

"Omoski will throw, too," said the old chief to his son.

"Omoski would rather seek the RED BEAR," was the answer.

Killb'ar, while seemingly indifferent, pricked up his ears at mention of the Red Bear. From boyhood having had intercourse with Indians, he could understand almost every word uttered by his captors. This was not the first time he had heard the name of the RED BEAR pronounced by savages. It was an appellation they occasionally bestowed upon DAVID CROCKETT, who, at this period, was celebrated far and near for his wonderful deeds.

From what the prisoner could gather, Omoski—than whom none of the Cherokee, or in fact of any other tribe, was more distinguished in chase or battle—had from youth panted to seek for mortal combat the formidable white hunter of the West.

On this day he had won the long-wished-for consent of his father and the other chiefs, to go in search of the great Red Bear.

Not unconditionally. If in seven days, by which time

there was to be a battle with the whites, Omoski should not have met the Bear, or if, without having fought the same, he should return too late to take part in the battle, he was to die by his father's own hand!

Overjoyed, the young Indian now was the most active among his companions preparing for the game.

The preparations soon were completed. The tomahawk was first to be thrown. An Indian youth stood with his back to a tree, the weapon to be hurled within an inch of him without touching a hair. In a few minutes all but Omoski had made the trial, their tomahawks striking an inch or so wide of the mark. Easily, without apparent effort, the chief's son pulled forth his weapon and hurled it.

There was a low murmur of applause as the edge buried itself in the very line marked for the target.

"What think of that, pale-face?"

"Well enough for an Injun," answered Killb'ar, "but not a sarcumstance to what I've did. I once throwed a knife cl'ar over the top of a hundred-foot tree, so that it comed down, p'int foremost, and stuck in the head of a red-skin, beneath, on t'other side."

A contemptuous shrug was the only response.

The game proceeded, the knife being brought into requisition.

Many of the Indians hurled it well, but none of them to equal the skill of Omoski, who threw his so that the point passed through the scalp-lock of the youth at the tree, pinning it to the trunk.

Still Killb'ar looked quite indifferent.

"Wagh!" shrugging his shoulders; "this chap are smart, but he ain't a sarcumstance to *me*!"

The speaker's bonds were severed, a knife was placed in his hand.

"Let pale-face try," was the sneering remark.

"Ker-whoop, yer skunks, now ye'll see the fire fly!"

Refusing the knife, he picked up a rotten stump and hurled it straight at the Indian youth, striking him with the missile on the head.

"Thar, kin yer beat that?" he exclaimed, grinning as the pieces of wood fell all round the Indian's face.

The old chief looked angry and shrugged his shoulders.

"The pale-face can do nothing. His words are as thunder from a little cloud!"

"Jist give me a knife and ye'll see. Let a gal stand by the tree, instead of that 'are masculine!"

Not one of the maidens would come, until the old chief proclaimed that *Omoski* would throw, when forth stepped pretty Minniho, thus showing her unbounded confidence in her lover's skill.

The word was given, the blade was hurled with a quivering motion.

Catching a lock of the girl's hair round the handle, the knife struck the tree, within a quarter of an inch of the bright head.

"That sart'inly war a powerful throw!" exclaimed Kill-b'ar, "but I kin beat it."

Several strong arms arrested him as he lifted the knife he held.

"Wagh! you're afraid! yer haven't narve enough Ker-whoop!"

Stung by the taunt, the Indians released his arm. Several, however, stood ready to brain the hunter, if he should harm the tribe's favorite.

"Now jist look hyar!"

Taking aim, he hurled the knife, when those who had expected to see it pierce the flesh of the pretty Minniho, beheld it flying ten yards to the left of her, the handle striking on the nose, the tribe's prophet, a little stumpy old Indian, supporting himself on a stick.

"That war a mistake! Let me try ag'in!"

Jeeringly an Indian gave him the knife, which, being thrown a second time, went turning a somerset up among the branches of the tree.

"Whar is it? whar are it?" inquired the hunter, turning round and round, while glancing upward. "Hooraw! Ker-whoop! none of yer kin beat that throw. I tossed the knife cl'ar up into the sky!"

As he spoke, down came the weapon, falling into an iron pot behind the tree.

The Indians, having had enough of the captive's skill, now

made him sit down, while preparations were being made for his torture and death.

Minniho, passing him, he touched the skirt of her robe.

"Jist tell yer lovyer, that ef he wants ter find the Red B'ar, I kin guide him to the quarters of that 'are, as I happen to belong to the same parts. I kin do it in seven days easy, if nothin' happens."

On being informed of this, Omoski eyed the speaker keenly. A good judge of character, he was convinced that the hunter did not deceive him. There was also a something, a peculiar magnetism about the captive which pleased Omoski. He liked the man, and used his influence with his father to take him as his guide.

Strong objections were urged, but Omoski's impulsive eloquence was successful.

Deprived of all weapons, the hunter should be the Indian's guide, the old chief advising his son, when the two halted for sleep, to bind the arms and feet of his prisoner to prevent his escape, and always, when on the trail, to keep the white man in front, and to be ready to shoot him down at any proper provocation.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST DAY.

AT sunrise, next morning, Omoski stood equipped for his journey. He wore a buffalo cloak, prettily trimmed by Minniho, and carried besides his bow and arrows, a handsome rifle, trophy of a victory won in fight with a celebrated chief.

Minniho turned aside her head to hide the tears of mingled pride and grief when the young warrior came to bid her adieu.

"Ker-whoop !" exclaimed Killb'ar, "his buzzum ain't stirred by the divine inflatus. Why, ginger and merlasses ! When I war younger, a little critter once comed along and begun a-weepin' out her sorrers on my shoulder. My feelin's

sart'inly war then beyond compression. My heart war like a lump of mekin' lead, an' my hull bein' war stirred like a wasp-nest, when a stick are poked inter it. To get rid of my d'hillt situation, I jist gave on a spring which landed me clear down to the bottom of a well, thirty feet deep, when I war soon cooled off, arter blowin' a few bubbles to the top."

Striking into a path leading westward into the forest, Oneshi followed his guide, who moved with a celerity which owed to its utmost the strength and activity of the young Indian.

"Come on, re-l-skin, come on!" Killwar would at intervals exclaim, as if he was the master. "I'll bet yer my leg is the longest."

"Zing, plenty long. Stop speak. Move on!"

They journeyed swiftly on, until sundown, when finding themselves in the country of the Cree, with whom the Cherokees were then at war, they proceeded with more caution.

At night they halted in the heart of a thick forest.

"Stop, stop! When sun burn skin, keep on!"

"I'm perfectly within," answered Killwar, squatting down, and proceeding to help himself to provisions out of the provisions-sack, which he was made to bear, slung at his side.

"Wouldn't yer like some duck-flesh, I reckon?" he inquired, pointing about thirty feet above their heads, where a large woodcock sat perched on a branch.

"Not cook now; not make fire."

"Sart'inly not, but we may eat some other time."

So saying, he suddenly snatched Oneshi's knife from his belt, and, by a peculiar whirl of the hand, sent it spinning upward, glittering like a lightning-flash in the rays of the moon.

To the Indian's undoubted surprise, the knife passed through the bird, which fell dead to earth.

"Fancy that," said Oneshi; "thought you know how to throw knife!"

"My fingers must hev been cramped in your inland camp," was the reply.

The duck was placed in the sack, after which the two prepared for sleep.

"Must tie white-face all fast," said the Indian, producing

things of deer-hide. "Deer steal away when they sleep. Come!"

"Beggin' your pardon, the deer, as you term him, refuses to be tied. Who in thunder are you lookin' at in that way?" as Omoski's eyes flitted on him like live coals.

The tomahawk was upraised.

"Kill quick if not be tied. Come!"

"That's no need of my comin', so in' as I'm already here," the hunter coolly replied. "I won't be tied, but I give you my word I won't try to escape."

"Tie!"

"That, that are the third time I've been comin' by you and yer brother skanks!" cried the hunter, looking straight over the speaker's shoulder.

Then suddenly bounding forward, he jerked the Indian back with a force which brought him to the ground like a sledge-hammer.

Left untouched where he had fallen, the Indian, still groaning with indignation, was surprised at KILLB'AR's steady composure. He could account for this only by supposing the hunter to be a coward, weakly bent on making his escape.

As the thought passed swiftly through his mind, he heard something whizz through the air, making a strange, low sound.

Jumping up, he perceived that KILLB'AR was gone.

About ten feet from where he stood, however, the thick underbrush was violently agitated, and a succession of strange noises issued from it. These noises consisted of heavy breathing, frequent snuffing, and now and then a prolonged, half-suppressed snarl like a panther's! The noises increased as the Indian hurried to the spot; the voice of his guide now being distinctly audible:

"You infernal skunk! That—that's a taste of my nails: Take that, will yer! Ears and ornaments! Thunder and lightning! What yer doin'? Squirm! squirm! squirm and kick, will yer! That's a punch in the eye for yer! Squirm! squirm! squirm! He-r-r-r! He-r-r-r! He-r-r-r! I'll make yer fly! Yer may kick—yer may jump, and yer may yell! Hyar's a lesson that'll show yer up, even in case of gun-powder!"

So rapidly were these works effected, that they were finished by the time Oneshi reached the amphitheatre whence the voice of the hunter proceeded.

Pushing aside the bushes, he then discovered Killb'ar, engaged in a desperate struggle with a powerful Indian of the Cree tribe; the motions of both being so swift and supple that their legs and arms seemed to go round and round like a windmill!

Oneshi was about firing upon the Indian, when Killb'ar's voice was again heard:

"Heh, thar! don't yer fire! Awt now clear the track! Hyar's the track of a leecher coming!"

So saying, the hunter—who, by a slight movement, had contrived to get between the legs of his antagonist—suddenly taking himself, sent the Cree spinning head foremost over Oneshi, into the bushes, whence he again began.

The Cherokee sprang toward the spot, tomahawk in hand, but the other man by this time vanished, not, however, until Oneshi had caught a glimpse of his face, and recognized him as Elio, a chief who had vainly endeavored to induce Min-lie to forsake her tribe and go to his village.

"Thar!" said Killb'ar, now stepping forth, "that 'are skunk *did* fight powerful!"

"He is a dog!" answered the other. "He sneaks away when he should fight. His tribe are all dogs. They have killed some of our men to death. Ten Cree's fight two Cherokee—ugh!"

"I respect yer belief, I agree, and kin understand 'em; for I too have lost them as war dogs to me, than the fattest bear or badger! Hired by red snakes, the poor critters is as cowardly as a sheep, not in a horizontal position like Cattle, but with their poor heads lowered byar and thar like drumsticks!"

He then explained why he had shown the Indian in such an unbecoming manner. He had seen the Cree, just as his tomahawk was about to leave his hand, and but for his having his eyes put out, the weapon would have cloven his skull. The Indian was armed with a rifle, which he had probably intended to discharge at Killb'ar after training the other. When the hunter sprang upon him, he was in the

act of cocking his piece, which the other prevented by knocking the weapon from his grasp.

"That war a powerful loss I gave the red skin," continued the speaker, "but not a circumstance to what I did once, which war to take one ear up to the top of a tree, a hundred feet high. Although the skunk war dead, he cling to the branch for two hours arterwards!"

"But talk!—Pace-too brave, but too much talk!"

"Not too fast, Moscow,"—in this way the hunter pronounced the Indian's name—"not too fast. Thunder and lightning! I've met with greater adventures than you! I've killed Indians like a streak! Once I started my rifle when I war after some, and find it off a hundred and fifty miles in a minute, which war too fast, as I war and clear over the heads of them I war after! That find the cation, which are the better part of a day!"

Returning to the brushwood where the contest had taken place, Killb'ar reappeared, grinning from ear to ear, with the Cree's rifle and knife, which had been left there.

"This are a pretty good piece," remarked the hunter, "and though I are yer pais'ner, Moscow, I'd like to keep this as a trophy!"

"Yes, good!—Onoski's pais'ner no more. You save Onoski's life! Onoski's hand shall never be lifted against his white—"

"Hist!" interrupted Killb'ar. "Make no rash promises, Moscow! The best of friends sometimes has some secrets. Thunder! I war once engaged in a mortal combat with one which war my bezzina companion! I just feel my rifle to air, and give the fellow I war engaged with a bang, which war so powerful it reminded us that we war both Indians, and war doin' wrong!"

As he spoke, Killb'ar drew forth the barrel of his piece, and thrusting it into the ground, applied his ear to the upper end.

"I hear a bezzin' in the earth! That's Indians around! We'd better make our quarters in some other part."

"It is well."

They traveled several miles farther before they again halted.

"That Minnie-hello, or hello-Minnie, whatever you call her, are a purty critter. She are a very different bein' from Suke Spoon, and I s'pose you intend marryin' her," said Killb'ar stretching himself on the ground.

"Don't know. Perhaps she love somebody else."

"How kin ye know that? Once I thought Suke Spoon war arter a Puritan minister. But I changed my mind when one day he put his foot on her pumpkin-patch! It war an acci-bent, but what a yell she gived! You mought have heard it clear hyar. She jist rushed into the garden, and throwed a hot skillet arter him, which showed me that her skeptical heart wasn't pierced by Cupid's arrow!"

"Right! Love like stars, flowers and sunshine. No storm—ugh!"

"Yer right, Moscow, a-leavin' out yer *poultry* (poetry), which are a little too fur-fetched. The devotion of t'other sex sometimes makes 'em despit. Thar's Suke Spoon would take my h'ar for not lovin' her."

"Talk enough! Moon high! Better go sleep!"

"That are perfectly sensible, Moscow," replied Killb'ar. And throwing himself down, he was asleep in five minutes, thus compelling the Indian to stand guard!

CHAPTER III.

THE SECOND DAY.

A desire to escape the persecutions of Suke Spoon was not the only motive which had led Killb'ar to "this side of the Rocky Mountains."

A sort of knight-errant of the woods, he had been brought up a thorough hunter, and had thus acquired a strong distaste for settling in one place. Having lost several relatives by tomahawk and scalping-knife, he had learned to look upon most red-men as his mortal foes, and had made a solemn vow to assist any white person whom, in his wanderings, he might meet in a situation requiring his aid. Of tough, sinewy

frame, he seemed capable of enduring any amount of hardship—could sleep as sound in a hollow tree or upon its topmost branch, as upon the bear-skin which he always carried slung upon his shoulders, and could walk thirty miles without fatigue.

It was natural that such a man, hearing it reported that troops under General Jackson were on their way to fight the Indians and Cherokees, should set out with the intention of joining the marching army.

He had, however, still another purpose in travelling to the east; that of being present at the marriage of a friend of his—a young man named Mark Winters, who by a messenger had sent him word of and an invitation to the approaching wedding, which was to take place in a little settlement near to and on the west of the Savannah river.

This settlement Killbar had visited in his boyhood, but could not now recall its exact situation. As a consequence he had passed it, many miles, before a negro whom he intended to meet and question, informed him of the fact. He had, just before being captured by the Cherokees, intended to return his way; but now being guide to Onocki, he must pass considerably to the north of it.

The girl whom Mark Winters intended to marry was Lucy Ward, eighteen years old and the acknowledged belle of the settlement. Her eyes, while full of spirit, were of a soft brown, her skin of a healthy cleanness, her features delicate. In fact there was an expression almost ethereal about the whole brow and in the intelligent eyes, owing perhaps to her superior culture: her uncle, with whom she had lived since an early childhood, having encouraged in her a taste for books, not often evinced by the frontier damsels of that period.

On the day after the adventure met with by Killbar and Onocki, Lucy Ward sat in her uncle's home, expecting her intended husband; the marriage being fixed for the following night.

Hours passed and still the bridegroom came not.

The report that Jackson's troops were on the way, had rendered the settlers more careless than their wont, although there was a rumor that the settlement might at any time be attacked.

Mark Winters, wholly unsuspecting of peril, had ridden forth without arms, in the morning, to bring to the settlement the minister who was to perform the ceremony, and who resided in another little village, several miles further to the south.

His protracted absence excited in the girl feelings of great anxiety. Unable at last to bear the suspense, she left the room unseen, and mounting her horse, dashed off into the woods, hoping to meet Mark before proceeding far. Riding ten miles, her horse suddenly took fright at a branch, which fell crushing in her path, and dashed off at a tremendous pace, carrying her miles further, before she could check its course.

Tying the horse to a tree, she then sat down upon a rock, feeling very miserable. She was roused from her troubled reverie by some singular outward influence. She turned and raised her eyes, to behold those of an Indian fixed keen and glittering upon her face. It was the magnetism of that glance which had waked her.

The Indian was Omoski!

There he stood, mingled admiration and respect in his glance; but she, not the less startled, sprung to her feet with a slight scream.

Glancing down, at the same moment, she beheld at her feet a large rattlesnake whose eyes seemed turned up to her own!

A half smile lighted the Indian's face.

"Ben kill!" he said, tapping his tomahawk; "can not harm the white dove!"

"Oa, I see! you are a friendly Indian! Speak! have you met a white man on horseback in the woods?"

A cloud passed over the Indian's face.

"The dove's heart is in her eyes! She loves white man!"

"Yes, oh, yes!"

"Omoski has not seen him!" said the young warrior, gloomily.

"Her-whoop! hello! Hyar's a discovery! What is it, Moscow?"

And Kitcher, who had halted near a stream to get some water, now appeared.

Lucy explained.

"Well, now! this are a meetin'! So you are the gal Mark's goin' to marry? I'm powerful glad to see yer, as Mark war a great friend o' mine! I'll jist see yer safe to the settl'ment, and will then help to hunt for the missin' one!"

"Oh, what *can* have become of him?"

"Clear up, my poor gal! I'll hunt up yer lover! It isn't my first experience in that 'are kind of work. I kin say I've hunted up a hundred and fifty, found 'em all, and seen 'em united to the objects of their affections. One lover war so grateful to me that he made me a present of a barrel of potatoes, a bar'l of biled beef, and offered me one of his young-ones when it war born, which I declined because it looked too much like an Injun and had a belly like an empty bar'l of whisky!"

The three—Lucy mounted on her horse—were seen on their way toward the settlement.

They traveled for two hours, when Lucy, who now was much puzzled as to the proper direction, said she believed they were going the wrong way.

"Thar's a smoke 'way off thar!" exclaimed Killb'ar, pointing to the southward; "p'raps that comes from the settlement. I've seed it ever since noon; hope the Injuns hev not set fire to the houses, but guess not, as the smoke ain't thick enough. The fondness of the Injun natur' for fire are perfectly miraculous. Thar's all kinds of *gossamer* as to where the Injans come from, some holdin' forth that they come from snappin'-turtles, some from Asiatic Africa, and others from terbacker, ginger and molasses! Kin any Chinee swallow sich nonsense? Come, Moscow, own up that yer race come straight from the devil!"

"Manitou knows! Indian come from war-horses! White man from sheep!"

"Yer are welcome to yer opinion, Moscow, perfectly welcome! Yer great Man-toe, as yer call him, though, may yet kick yer all into the Perchick ocean!"

Omoski's eyes flashed fire.

"The white-faces *may* drive the red-men into the setting sun! We will see!"

"Not quite so far as that! With the help of corks yer

might float on the ocean and be picked up, but the settler's son won't pick yer up!"

"Why would the white man rob us? This land was made for us! The birds say this to us! The bright, laughing fish say it too!"

"It's no use, Moscow! Yer can't make me swaller that I never heerd a fish larf but once, and that war a big cat, fish, that I made a grab at with my teeth, when I war once set up for a dinner, and wanted to ketch the critter as it swam past. He jist gave one spring away from me, and then stickin' his head out o' water, burst into sich a guffaw as split him clear in two. That war a triumph to me! I cooked one half, and saved t'other for Suke Spoon, with whom I war then on friendly terms!"

The smoke now was no longer visible. In a couple of hours, just before sundown, the party beheld something which made them pause with sensations of awe and surprise.

"What was it?"

A strange, hideous-looking object, it protruded from the shadows of the lindens, the cypresses and white-leaved oaks, growing round the borders of a swamp!

"Thunder!" exclaimed Killbuck, cocking his rifle, "that are a strange critter! It looks like a bear as ain't a bear, arter all!"

In fact, the object at first resembled some huge animal, seated on its haunches, but a keener inspection gave it a different aspect.

It was the trunk of a tree, about fifteen feet in height, charred and blackened, as if by recent fire. Near the top, projecting straight out, there was something which might have been mistaken for a broken branch, but for its peculiar shape and rigidity!

Examining this closely, Killbuck perceived that the projection was nothing less than a *human arm deprived of its flesh and of its five fingers!*

"Come hyar, Moscow. Thunder! this are sartinly a horrible sight!"

The Indian advanced, followed by Lucy, who had dismounted.

To whom had the arm belonged?

Killb'ar, trembling with a horrible suspicion, examined the tree closely.

There was in the trunk, near the ground, an opening large enough to admit the human body, which, charred and bleached by fire, the hunter now beheld, wedged in the tree.

The unfortunate, whoever he was, had evidently crept into the hollow to escape Indians, who, discovering him, had burnt him there alive!

Searching for something to prove the identity of the deceased, Killb'ar picked up a ring. This soon caught the eye of Lucy Ward, who recognized it as one she had often seen on Mark's middle finger.

She leaned almost fainting against a tree.

"It is he!" she gasped. "Oh, my God!"

Killb'ar supported her with an arm.

"You are right, I'm afraid, my poor girl. I'll avenge your lover; I'll make some of the red-skins expiate for this deed."

"That will not bring him back!" moaned Lucy. "Oh, Mark! Mark!"

Her eyes were wild; it seemed for several moments as if she must lose her reason.

Omoski, watching her, said:

"The white dove must not die. She will live to sing again!"

Lucy turned, shuddering, away. All Indians, kindly or otherwise, must, after this, excite aversion.

Some time elapsed before Killb'ar could persuade the stricken girl to mount and resume her journey.

The Indian said he would await Killb'ar's return from the settlement, the houses of which were visible in the far distance, through an opening among the trees.

Father Killb'ar and Lucy repaired. The news spread rapidly, and a party soon were at the tree, burying the dead.

Omoski had vanished!

Having seen the body buried, Killb'ar followed the Indian's trail, and came upon him seated in the shrubbery, his eyes fixed on the house where Lucy lived.

"See hyar, Moscow! What in thunder are yer up to? Hope yer mean no harm to that poor stricken gal?"

"No; but the spirit is gone out of the Indian! The eyes of the dove have drawn it away from him. They have melted his heart like the sun. When they go, he sees only clouds!"

"Then, now, none of yer poetry. Jist tell me, in plain skunk language, what yer mean."

The Indian, shrugging his shoulders, answered not, but moved on toward the settlement.

"What in thunder are yer goin' to? Yer'll never find the Red B'ar in that direction."

Omoski stopped.

"Ugh! Yes, goin' wrong way!"

"Come," exclaimed Killbar, moving toward the west, "we ain't no time to lose!"

"Will the white men leave the wounded girl?"

"Sartinly, ef yer mean Lucy Ward. I used to do a powerful sight of consolatin', but I've lost the faculty now. Mark war dumber to that gal than spoiled leather-meat."

A shadow crossed the Indian's brow.

"She loved the pale-face well."

"Yer kin believe that. The poor critter are like a crushed grub. There's no chip left to her."

Now the Indian, with bowed head, slowly followed his companion.

"In a few days more," said Killbar, "yer'll be fightin' the Red B'ar."

The young warrior's eyes flashed.

Only for an instant. His glance went back toward the settlement. ••

Then he turned his face, every now and then, as the two moved on toward the setting sun.

When night came, they halted for rest and sleep.

Killbar awoke at daylight, to discover that his companion was gone!

In fact, Omoski had risen three hours before, and taken the lone track toward the settlement.

"The white dove has made a coward of Omoski," muttered the Indian, as he proceeded. "He thinks less and less

of the Red Bear ! The Great Manitou prevent his breaking his word !"

Finally he came close upon the settlement.

Screened by shrubbery, he beheld Lucy Ward, at this early hour, seated in a grove, mourning for her lost lover.

He sought her side ; she looked up, and shuddering, recognized him.

" Omoski !"

" Yes, come again."

" Go. Why are you here ?"

" Omoski can not go away. The dove's eyes told his heart."

" Killb'ar said you were bound west, to meet the Red Bear."

" Omoski can think no more of the Bear. He can only think of the white bird. He would give up all for her. See !"

From his pouch he pulled forth the beautiful amber beads Minniho had given him. He would have thrown them round her neck had she not drawn back.

" Won't take beads ?" he said, sorrowfully.

With childlike simplicity he stood, holding them up before her gaze.

" Give them to some girl of your own tribe ; Lucy's heart is with her lover in the grave. Go !"

The Indian walked sorrowfully away, and was soon out of sight in the deep forest.

Finally he paused, again turning his glance toward the settlement.

" Time may come. The white bird may yet sing for Omoski in his wigwam."

As he spoke, the Indian fancied he heard a sigh.

He started up, examined the shrubbery on both sides of him, but seeing nothing, concluded it was the wind he had heard.

He was mistaken ; it was Minniho ! She had indeed followed on her lover's trail, unable to bear his absence.

Poor Minniho !

CHAPTER IV.

THE THIRD DAY.

UNOBSERVED by her friends, the Indian girl had quitted the camp to follow her beloved. Carefully tracing the crooked trail, she had reached the vicinity of the settlement only that morning, and, by the merest chance, had been a witness to Onoski's interview with Lucy in the grove—had seen him offer *her* gift to the white-face girl.

Who can describe her grief?

Deep in the recesses of the dark forest, she mourned long over her disappointment.

Then hope animated her bosom. Perhaps, after all, Onoski's interest in the girl was nothing but one of those airy fancies which would soon pass away.

Watching her lover, after he entered the woods, she saw him proceed westward. He walked slowly, expecting to meet Kinkar, until night, when he paused. The whippoorwill now sang in the tree; the wild-duck shrieked in the marshy pond. A strange feeling of superstition came over the Indian.

Turning, he found himself in front of the tree in which the dead body had been discovered.

Was it imagination? No it was *really*. There was the arm of the body—that body which had been buried—still protruding from the tree!

He was yet more startled at hearing a voice, seeming to proceed from the hollow trunk!

"On, Onoski! on toward the west! Let no white-face lure him from his path! Glory awaits him in his combat with the Red Bear! He will conquer!"

The Indian stood as if spell-bound.

"The voice of Manitou!" he exclaimed, trembling with awe. "That voice shall be obeyed. Onoski turns to the west. The dove's spell is broken."

He hurried on. A cloud passed over the moon—the wind rose shrieking.

Hark! was that the murmur of a rivulet?

Ono-ki thought so, but he was mistaken; it was the silver laugh of Minniko, still following her truest lover.

Before midnight her heart sunk.

The beauty of the white girl again rose like a summer-cloud in the Indian's mind; his steps were turned back toward the settlement.

Frenzy was now in Minnie's heart. The holy love of Lucy had done the mischief—won her lover away from her.

A dark thought passed through her mind.

Death to the white-face girl !

Minnibo carried a superb rifle; the best I ever saw.

Before daylight she was close upon the little group, back of the settlement, in which, as she had expected to find in the case, she discovered Lucy.

In this grove she and Mark had often met. What a fitting place to mourn for her lover?

Watching her with blazing eyes, M. . . .
her rifle.

Just then, from the opposite side, another Kinsar, and stood before the white rain, looking out at the

"Don't be startled. You kin see his only son! How yer seen Omoski, lately?"

At Lucy's reply, Killian's eyes took fire.

"Just what I suspected. It's just a common cow, which in t'other respects is a good specimen, except his eyes to see chas you. Love, however, is a powerful character and works wonders. That's why his extraordinary occasions isn't at all given to him — that's why he can't see me comin', shold have told us much, but I could always tell when she was expectin' me by watchin' the clock fly up on the roof of the house."

Pausing a moment, he went on:

"It's my opinion this 'here place' was the original Indian town. I was traveling along in front of Oronoko, I was going west, when I came to a place from which I could see down into a valley. There I saw two Indian towns, one of them was a Cherokee and the other a Creek. There was some late agreement between the two tribes. It was a war."

"I'd hev seen the fer fly, as the two would hev jined in mortal combat."

He did not add that he had found the grave, in which the dead body taken from the tree had been buried, opened and the body pulled out, and put back in the hollow trunk.

Who but Indians would have performed such a deed?

"I will tell my uncle, sir."

"And don't you come to this grove any more. Ef that's Injuns around, yer don't know at what moment they might take yer ha'r."

As he spoke, Killbar's eyes lighted up strangely.

"Look out that! Gin'er and mekases?"

The words were uttered in a quick, stern voice. Seizing the girl's hand, the hunter drew her behind a huge white-leaved oak, not a moment too soon.

There was a crash, and a bullet whizzed past the tree.

"Don't yer stir now, lyer before I come back!" cried the hunter; "*not fer yer life!*"

So saying, he quitted her, and keeping himself concealed by the shrubbery, moved to the distance of a hundred yards, then, turning suddenly, he sprang out of the bushes branching off, with swift, noiseless step, upon Minnieho, who was creeping away.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed Killbar, seizing her by the shoulder and searching her ribs: "what yer mean by such work, not at all according to Christ'n principles?"

"White-face girl must die."

"No skin thing I yer ever heard of time. Why, ef it isn't Minnieho! I kin see yer now and yer husband. Deal any reg'lar of Minnieho in at the bottom of the 'ere work?"

"The white dove carries Oneg's heart in her claws!" cried the girl, gritting her teeth.

"Bah, she can't carry no claws. Ef yer war to see Sake Spoon, how yer might talk about claws, soon as her'n are here a little; she kin sweat an' pull powerful. I've seen her pull up a tree by the root, and when wantin' firewood, split a board with her nails."

"Give rifle."

"Ef yer'll promise not to shoot Lucy. I know I kin rely on yer word."

" Rifle! rifle!" cried the girl, stamping her foot impatiently.

" Come, now! whar's the use of this jealousy? Lucy cares nothin' for Moscow, and you jist believe me when I tell yer he'll soon git over his fancy. If you understood human nature you'd know that *you* are the one he are arter, in reality. I know it, ef you don't."

" How know?"

" I heerd him, while asleep, pernoonce the name of Minnie-hello one hundred forty-five and a half times."

She knew that he exaggerated; still she felt convinced by what he had said, that Omoski *had* once or twice pronounced her name, or the hunter would not have thought of it.

The information subdued her at once.

" Give rifle; promise not to shoot," she said, her eyes glistening.

Killb'ar at once surrendered the weapon, advising the girl to get back to her tribe.

She quitted him without reply. He returned to Lucy, informed her of what had passed, and persuaded her to return to the settlement.

Back to the woods again, he met Omoski.

He said nothing to him of the presence of Minnie, thinking she would rather not have it known as yet. He however informed him of what he had seen in the valley.

" Yer people will attack the settlement. Do you intend to jine them or to foller me?"

" Omoski *must* go west."

" Come on, then."

" The white dove will sing in time. She will sing for some other than Omoski," murmured the Indian as he proceeded.

" You are jealous, Moscow. Sake Spoon war once jalous o' me because I looked at a gal while I war a-walkin' with her. Twa-ter! she jist gave me a smack, jumped clear over the top of the gal's head and went to tearin' her calico dress into a thousand pieces."

" The voice of the white-face girl is sweeter than a bird in the mullerry-tree. Her eyes s'fer than the dew on a wing."

" Ther, Moscow, that's poetry ag'in. Her voice are

sweeter than Suke Spoon's, but thar's Minnie-lollo's, which are as sweet. You'd better love the Indian gal. If you will, I'll make yer a present of as nice a pile of buffeler-meat as ever went down yer gizzard."

CHAPTER V.

THE FOURTH DAY.

THE news that Indians were hovering round the settlement had alarmed many of the inhabitants—among them Lucy's uncle—who were now packing up to start at once for a stronger post further west.

By ten o'clock they set out, the party consisting of six mounted women, all married except Lucy, and half a dozen stalwart men, well armed.

Many glances of pity and admiration were directed toward Lucy Ward, whose little black riding-hat with its green feather matched well with the sad, beautiful face.

The party had proceeded about thirty miles by sundown, and were hurrying on, when a man who had been riding in advance, was seen coming with hand elevated, as a signal to halt.

"There are Injuns ahead!"

Several half-suppressed cries of affright were heard among the women, some of whom turned their horses' heads as if to seek safety in flight.

"We'd better halt and keep a good guard."

Several of the party plunged into the brush on either side, to reconnoiter.

Meanwhile all were uneasy, as their situation was favorable for an attack. They occupied a clearing in the woods, while ahead of them was a deep valley, into which a torrent rushing with impetuous roar, must have drowned the noise of an approaching foe.

The heavens were rapidly growing dark, foreboding a storm. A large tent was hastily erected, and not a moment

too soon, for, ere long, down fell the rain in torrents, the wind howled, the thunder roared, the lightning flashed almost incessantly.

Night came and still the scouts remained absent. The women, in one corner of the tent, were huddled together like frightened sheep, while in another the men kept their weapons dry for emergency.

Suddenly there was a crash, louder than any previously heard.

"A tree struck by lightning," said a man who had been stationed on guard, near the valley. "Do you hear that roaring noise?" he added; "that is the torrent which has swollen. If it don't stop soon it will overflow the valley."

"Hark! what was that?"

The crack of a rifle was heard, then followed a wild scream like that of a man in mortal agony.

CHAPTER VI.

NARROW ESCAPE.

KER-WHOOP! Thunder, what a storm! S'pose we git into this hollow tree, which are big enough to hold us both, if we can squeeze in."

Killb'ar and his companion had penetrated deep into the recesses of the forest, where the storm broke upon them. It kept increasing, so that they were in danger from the falling branches of the trees.

As Killb'ar spoke, both advanced toward the hollow tree, an oak of large dimensions.

Suddenly the hunter whispered quickly.

"I reckon we'd better not git into that 'are tree."

"Why?"

"Thar's a red *skunk* thar!"

Omoski lifted his rifle.

"Not so fast, young loss. Yer mind are so full of that white-face girl that yer don't know what ye are about

half the time. That are always the way with them as is love-sick."

"What going to do? Indian in tree no see us."

"No, but ef I ain't mistaken, he hev heard us, and are a-lyin' in wait to trap us. His head be in' 'way up in the tree, his eyes ain't sharp enough to see through the trunk. Once, when I war intently excited, I see'd clear through a well-cut trunk six inches thick, but that war a pekoohlar circumstance, as I war a boy at the time, a-runnin' away from the school-master, as war a-join' to whack me with a bull-whip."

So saying, Killbuck moved forward, followed by his companion, walking straight past the tree. To do this certainly required nerve, as the Indian's tomahawk might easily have reached the two while their backs were turned toward the tree.

Not a breath, however, issued from the trunk.

"Now I'll show yer a trick," said Killbuck, as he cautiously approached the tree from behind.

Having reached it, he threw himself down, and whirling suddenly round in front of it, grasped the Indian by the legs, pulling him out of the hollow!

To his surprise, the red-skin—a Cree—uttered not a word, but lay motionless where he had fallen.

"Tah-lah! hyar's a circumstance I never heerd of before. An Indian never under'taken. It must be that the Quakers has converted this 'ere skunk."

As he spoke, a lightning-flash revealed the eyes apparently fixed, and a blue spot like paint upon the forehead.

"Hush! and no talk! I see in'er this. The red-skin hev been struck by lightning. Look at this 'ere tree."

Glancing upward, the Indian noticed what had so long attracted the attention of the two, that the tree was ripped and shattered in many places.

Once he turned a short distance the plowed ground into which the lightning had passed. He was still inspecting it, when he was suddenly started by a cry behind him.

"Hush! no talk! I see in'er this!"

Turning, his astonishment may be imagined, when, by a brief flash, he beheld the supposed dead Indian upon one knee,

his hand on Killbar's throat, his glittering tomahawk upraised to cleave the skull of the man whom he had suddenly taken by surprise.

The young chief lifted his rifle, and, taking good aim, fired, when, with a yell of agony, up jumped the Indian several feet into the air, and fell dead.

This was the noise which had been heard by the settlers encamped in the clearing.

"Good shot!" cried Killbar, jumping up, "and I thank yer for it. That'd be other red-skins pomein' upon us on account of the noise, though. So we'd better clear the way."

As he spoke, he suddenly leaned forward, and a lightning-flash pointed out the heads of several Indians peering above the shrubbery skirting the valley, which was on the left of the two.

"Thunder! and *thar* are white men," continued the hunter, as the settlers, alarmed by the report of the rifle, rushed from the tent, making their way to the edge of the valley.

As they stood grasping their rifles firmly, the whizzing of arrows and the crack of several rifles were heard.

One of the white men fell dead, when with terrific yells up started the dusky warriors as if by magic.

"To horse!" shouted the little party of whites, as they retreated, firing upon their foes. "To horse—there in the tent."

The women were either too terrified, or from devotion were unwilling to desert their husbands at such a moment.

At last, however, rushed to the bower in which, repelled by the light of a lantern, hung where the shrubbery was thickest, were the horses. The retreating men, when they reached the tent, finding its fair occupants gone, judged that they had made off as directed to do.

Taking, therefore, to their heels, they plunged into the shrubbery, and ran for their lives.

A portion of the Indians pursued, the rest found their way to the bower and threw themselves upon the women there huddled together like so many frightened sheep.

In a few moments five of the poor creatures were gasping out their lives upon the wet ground.

The remaining one, Lucy Ward, had thrown herself down beside her horse, which she had been unable to loose from the sapling to which it was attached, and with clasped hands was praying.

Whether it was owing to her extreme beauty, or that they could not decide whether to kill or make her a prisoner, certain it is that the red-men, as they closed round her, hesitated to strike.

There they stood hideously revealed in their terrible war-paint, around one defenseless girl, their tomahawks elevated high above the bright head.

A few hasty words were exchanged; then one of the Indians, catching the girl by her long hair, drew back to inflict the deadly blow.

Bang! cr-r-ack! whi-z-z!

"Ker-whoop! yer skunks! B'ars and catamounts! Thunder and lightnin'!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIFTH DAY.

KILLB'AR and Omoski, on hearing the shrieks of women, had hurried forward to render assistance.

The tangled shrubbery, impeding their progress, and the work of slaughter having been so quickly accomplished, they had not approached within sight of the bower until the five women had fallen beneath their savage foes.

At sight of the Indian about to strike Lucy Ward, Killb'ar had fired, sending a bullet through the red-man's heart, while Omoski, with equal promptitude, perceiving that the savages were Creeks, had shot the one by his side.

Springing into the bower with a determination to save Lucy or die with her, both men must have fallen before being

able to force the girl away, but for a circumstance as natural as it was fortunate.

At sight of the Indians, the horses had reared with affright and commenced to kick; at the crashing of the two rifles, so close to their ears, their motions had become still more violent. Rearing and plunging, they now swerved to one side, forming a barrier between the Cree and the two intruders, who had drawn the girl toward them.

"Hyar now, my poor little one!" exclaimed Killb'ar, "hyar's a chance fur yer to escape! Away yer go like a streak, and jist make tracks back to the settlement."

So saying, he with his knife severed the rein, and lightly tossed Lucy upon the back of a horse, which, with one tremendous bound, cleared the lower and dashed off like the wind!

Onoski and Killb'ar were each about springing upon another horse, when an Indian, who had crawled forward, grasped the white man by the leg, while another, throwing himself upon Onoski, thrust him out of the lower, engaging with him in a desperate struggle.

Killb'ar drove his knife into his adversary's breast; then springing out of the lower before the others could overtake him, he knocked down with his clubbed rifle the savage fighting with Onoski, thus enabling the latter to retreat.

The white hunter and the chief's son started off in different directions through the shrubbery, just as the other Indians, having got clear of the horses, came rushing out of the lower with a loud yell.

Favored by the imperfect light of the storm clouds, Killb'ar hastened along; then, suddenly crawling aside, lay perfectly motionless behind a fallen tree.

His enemies had started in pursuit, and in a few moments he saw them rush past him.

He was about rising to his knees to crawl in the direction where Onoski had disappeared, when, by a flash, he noticed the faces of three Indians right ahead of him, not more than fifty feet distant.

They were pushing the bushes aside and peering into them.

The same flash which had shown them to him had, Kill-

Killbar doubted not, revealed his own person to *them*. There was no noise, it was true, but *that* was a circumstance to *confirm* his suspicions.

Turning, he therefore made off in a direction opposite to the one previously intended, hurrying along with the speed of a snake.

Soon he found himself on the edge of the valley, which was thickly skirted with shrubbery. He kept on until he was close to the swollen torrent. This had become so great that it was now filling the valley and must soon overflow it. As Killbar paused, he felt the water creeping above his ankles.

"This are a pesky bad state of affairs!" he muttered; "can't go back, can't go forrard! Thunder! Jist look **TEAR!**"

The stream, rushing impetuously on, had washed away a huge mass of loose earth, and now, with the roar of an avalanche, was pouring into the valley at a rate which must **FILL IT IN A SHORT TIME!**

The hunter crawled up the side of the hollow a few paces, then ran along it with the speed of a deer, his body being now exposed to his pursuers.

Several arrows whizzed past his head—two more grazed his temple, coming from ahead of him!

Glancing round him by the electric light, Killbar perceived that he was being hemmed in, his enemies approaching from three sides—the torrent holding him in check on the other.

"It's all up with me, I sart'ialy think," muttered Killbar. "There'll be no person left to mourn me exceptin' Suke Spoon, who will feel sorry she persecuted me so, when she hears of my untimely fate."

As he spoke, the hunter, shaking his head, felt it come in contact with a swaying branch.

Looking up, he discovered that the branch, which was a slender one, crept downward from a huge oak, one hundred feet high.

This inspired him with a happy thought.

As his enemies came closing in upon him, he caught the swaying branch and swung himself to the other side of the

valley ; then cut the branch short off, that the savages might not avail themselves of this convenient "pendulum."

Plunging into the recesses of the forest, he kept on until after midnight, walking in a zigzag direction, and now and then burying his trail in a stream, so as to baffle the Indians, who, walking along the overflowed valley, would doubtless continue the pursuit.

Afterward he took the back track, moving at right angles with his former course, hoping he might eventually fall in with Lucy Ward, or at least with Omoski.

Finally he came to a cave, where he concluded to halt for the night.

Spreading his bear-skin, he slept soundly until morning.

When he waked the storm was over and the sun was shining brightly. The leaves, glittering with rain-drops, resembled jeweled drinking-cups, and the birds made music all through the woods.

Killb'ar rose, shook himself, and moved on.

Walking swiftly, while keeping a wary eye around him, he suddenly heard a rustling ahead.

The next moment he found himself face to face with Omoski, who stepped forth from behind a tree.

"Good-mornin', Moscow! Glad to see yer with whole bones!"

"Glad see again," said Omoski, lowing. "Seen white dove?"

"Ef yer mean Lucy Ward, no. I am mighty concerned for that poor gal."

"So I. Heard scream in night. Seem to come from here."

"Heerd a screech? Well, that 'are must hev been while I war asleep. Yer say it come from hyarabout?"

"Yes."

"Then thar's no mistake about poor Lucy bein' caught by some red varmint. We must look her up, Injun, but re we keep on our journey west."

The young Indian's step was light as he followed his guide.

The two had not proceeded far, however, when the Indian pointed toward a hill upon their left.

There Killbar caught a glimpse of Lucy's horse, dashing riderless over the brow of the elevation.

"I must find out whar the gal is," said the hunter. "You, Moscow, kin keep straight on toward the west, and I'll jine yer be-fore long, by follerin' up yer trail."

"I go too," replied Omoski. "Can not rest till know if white bird safe."

He followed Killbar, who, quickly turning to the left, struck into the shrubbery in that direction.

Suddenly hearing the sound of hasty footsteps ahead of him, the hunter paused, his rifle held ready. The next moment, bursting from the shrubbery, appeared a tall athletic Indian, making off with Lucy Ward in his arms.

The girl was vainly endeavoring to disengage herself, when her captor drew his tomahawk, as if concluding to put an end to her struggles at once.

"What an ongallant skunk! Hyar's a pill to larn yer better manners!"

Up went his rifle, and he was about pulling the trigger, when a hollow murmuring noise saluted his ears, and down sunk the savage, with Omoski's tomahawk in his brain!

As the stricken one fell, there was a terrific yell behind him from nearly a dozen hideous-looking Indians, who now appeared from the thick brushwood!

Killbar's mind was made up in a moment. Dashing forward, he caught Lucy in his arms, and hurried off with her as if she were a mere child.

Speeding on he entered a valley, to find himself sinking to his waist in a marsh!

He clutched a log, deposited his burden thereon, and was about drawing himself out, when he heard a sort of hiss above his head!

Glancing up, he beheld his pursuers glaring down at him from the summit of a rock!

Three held life! their tomahawks to hurl them, the rest held pointed their rifles.

"Thunder!" cried Killbar, "it are all up with me! If yer see Sake Spoon, tell her that I forgive her her many persecutions of me, as a Christ'in should. And now blaze away, only don't hurt the gal!"

Lucy, half unconscious, clung to the log, right in range of rifles and tomahawks. Killb'ar, therefore, made several desperate efforts, and finally succeeded in bringing himself to the left of the girl.

"Now, then, be keerful to jist hit only me!"

Bang! went the rifles—whiz! went the tomahawks.

Killb'ar threw up one of his arms, and fell back into the swamp!

CHAPTER VII.

LUCY'S DEFENDER.

YELLING exultingly, the savages, clambering down the side of the rock, were approaching Lucy, when a nimble form suddenly came swinging to her side from the branch of a tree, drooping above the log.

It was Omoski!

He had climbed the tree, and ran out upon the branch with the speed of a squirrel, then sliding to the middle, had dropped just after the rifles were discharged.

Catching up the girl, he made off with her like an arrow, darting along the log into the thicket bordering the other side of the valley.

Soon he reached the foot of the hill where Lucy's horse had been seen.

The hill was steep and rocky in some places, but Omoski did not hesitate.

The yells of his pursuers, close behind him, urged him swiftly up the ascent, from one rocky prospect of which, crowned by a huge blasted tree, he perceived he might, for a while at least, keep his pursuers at bay.

Helpless of Lucy's struggles to release herself he finally gained the elevation.

"Let the white dove crouch down," he then said in tender accents; "Omoski will die for her!"

He released her, when Lucy turned to flee.

This, however, was rendered impossible by a steep rock in

front of her, which she could not scale, and which must be climbed before she could reach the path which her horse had descended. The shouts of the savages excited feelings of horror and aversion. She crouched instinctively, her head half turned over her shoulder toward Omoski, who, kneeling, held his bow ready, the barbed arrow fixed to be sent into the midst of his foes.

Soon the Indians appeared emerging from the brushwood at the foot of the hill.

On they came, the foremost to fall pierced by an arrow from the bow of Lucy's defender.

Quickly he set another shaft, while his voice rolled down the hill like hollow thunder.

"Back! or all die! The eagle will save the white dove!"

A defiant yell was the response, when whiz! went another arrow, and down went another Cree!

Four were now left. Straight toward the rocky parapet they advanced, two of them armed with rifles.

By ascending the rock they might now reach Omoski, but there was, in the fire of his eye, a something which made them hesitate.

Only for a moment. The next, grasping stunted roots growing from crevices in the side of the rock, they commenced the ascent, being now sheltered from Omoski's arrow or bullet, by the outward projecting of the rock's ribbed sides.

Now the meaning of that strange fire in the young chief's eyes, was explained. Grasping the broken trunk of the tree, he pushed upon it, by a single effort of his tremendous strength, sending it thundering down the side of the rock!

The result was as anticipated. The massive trunk, striking the ascending Crees, sent them tumbling headlong to the foot of the rock, where they lay bruised and unconscious with the tree upon them.

"Come," said Omoski, now seizing the arm of the young girl, "the eagle will fly away with the dove. She shall yet love him and sing for him in his wigwam."

Lucy heard him not; she was senseless.

He caught her up in one arm, scaled the rugged rock in front of them with the help of his gun-sling, gained the hill-path and hurried off.

Running along with the speed of a deer, he finally came to a small cave in a moss-covered bank near a stream, where he deposited his burden.

From the shrubbery near this cave—unseen—unheard by Omoski, a light form glided away with bowed head and heaving bosom.

It was Minniho !

Poor child ! At sight of her lover with the white maiden in his arms, she had resolved to think no more of the false man.

Alas ! Minniho was a simple forest-girl, whose love impulses were stronger than her pride. She had not learned the art of keeping her feelings crushed, hidden, like flowers under stones.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIXTH DAY.

As may be imagined, Killb'ar's falling back into the swamp when the Indians fired, was a mere feint to deceive them with the idea that he had been hit.

With his head hidden by the marshy reeds, projecting on all sides of him, he drew himself round the end of the log to the other side, holding on by a half-decayed branch, projecting from the lower part.

He had hardly done this when a few of the Indian party—the rest having, as shown, gone in pursuit of Omoski—clustered to the log and peered through the reeds.

Not seeing any thing of Killb'ar except his legs, which projected on this side of the log, they concluded that he had sunk, head downward, into the soft mire.

Very willing they should think so, Killb'ar remained motionless, hardly daring to breathe and hoping that the red men would not look on his side of the log. In fact the Indians, after a moment's hurried consultation, seemed to conclude to depart. They were about turning away, when an unlucky accident changed their purpose.

This was the breaking of the branch by which Killdeer supported himself, the snapping noise at once attracting the attention of the savages. The hunter had caught a projection on the end of the log, by which he now kept himself from sinking into the soft mire, being still screened from sight by the broad reeds growing round him.

From this position, through openings among the leaves, he could see his enemies pushing aside the grass to discover the source of the noise heard. They could not see him, owing to his head being in shadow, while he could plainly detect every movement of theirs.

Suddenly one of them advanced so close to his position, that their two heads came almost into contact.

The hunter nearly dislocated his neck, with the efforts he made to twist his head out of reach of the searcher's keen eyes.

A moment later the Indian turned his glances full upon Killdeer, when the eyes of the two met.

Killdeer, perceiving he was discovered, quietly thrust his head above the log, and in a voice something like a frog's, thus addressed the astonished spectators!

"Good afternoon, gentlemen! This are a bad place for a Christi'n!"

"Ugh! quick kill!" exclaimed the Indian, raising his tomahawk.

"Jist wait one minute, won't yer, and give a feller time to eat somethin'. Dying on an empty stomach are unpleasant fur a hoosier."

The Indian would not wait.

Down came his tomahawk, striking with a dull crash—the log.

Killdeer, raising himself, had knocked aside the descending arm.

Then, springing upon the log, he pushed the red-man back into the swamp, and planting one foot upon his body, leaped a distance of five feet to dry land, while the others were running toward him along the log.

Unfortunately, his foot catching in some twisted grass, he fell prostrate. Before he could rise the Indians were upon him, their deadly weapons lifted.

"Before you take my la'r," exclaimed the hunter, "I'll unburden my mind to yer. Jist tell that chap Mow-w, ef you ever see him—"

The nearest Indian did not seem inclined to let him finish the sentence. He was about striking when there was a scream, and a light form bounding from the thicket caught the descending arm so that the weapon just grazed the hunter's temple.

The Indians looked up with a grunt to behold standing in their midst the beautiful Minillo!

"Thunder! you've saved my life, Irjan boyooy. Nuchin' like this ever happened to me before, except one time, t'other side of the mountains. Ther I fell off over a precipice one hundred feet high, and war about to hev my life destroyed by some wild hogs, when Sake Sake came along and drove the critters away with a saucepan."

Meanwhile the Indians surveyed the girl several moments without speaking. The fame of her beauty having reached far, all present at once recognized her.

An alliance had lately been entered into between Creeks and Cherokees, therefore the former were inclined to hear with courteous deference the wishes of the Indian maiden. A brief conversation now ensued, and Killbar knew that the girl was pleading for his life. He heard her say that he (Killbar) had once saved Omoski from death. The Creeks had all heard of Omoski, but many of them had never seen him. Those in pursuit of him had mistaken him for a Seminole on account of his beautiful garb.

"Come," said Minillo at length, "follow me to Killbar, white man free now; if Creeks will, he shall be made so."

He followed the girl, who led him toward a pretty grove. There she paused and bowed her head, smiling.

"It is done. Omoski is lost to his tribe. Lost to Minillo forever! He has turned again from the setting sun, to listen to the white bird."

"Cheer up, gal, thar's time enough yet. Ef I can find him, I'll try powerful hard to brin him along with me again, toward the quarters of the Red Bar. It ain't such a very long journey from hyar," added Killbar, as he wiped the mud from his rifle.

"He will not hear you; the white girl has bewitched his heart."

She spoke in a sad voice, her eyes fixed upon the stream, rushing past.

"Cheer up, I tell yer. Why, thar war a gal I once knowed, whin a war arter a chap abo't my size. She thort he war arter another gal, when one day what does he do but jist comes to the gal's house a-bu'stin' the minister along by the ha'r of the head to marry him to the very gal that thort he warn't arter her. Ker-whoop! didn't she holler with joy? I war huntin' forty miles off, and I heard her screechin' the hull distance. Artterwards she sent me a piece of the weddin'-cake, detached to the horn of a tame buffler, which she had brought up as one of the family."

"Oneski never come to Minniho!" murmured the girl, sadly. "She may sit in her lodge and sing all day, but she is only a black bird, and the eagle will not come. Go, white man, go. If see Oneski, tell that Minniho trouble him no more."

"What yer mean? You are not goin' to sever yer mortal ties, I hope."

She answered not, but with a sad wave of the hand and one glance out of her black eyes, vanished in the deep woods.

Killdeer looked after her a moment, then shouldered his rifle and hurried toward the hill from which the Indian warrior had defended his charge.

Discovering the trail, he followed it, and by night found himself opposite to the mossy retreat in which the Indian had deposited Lucy. The young girl was now refusing to give any encouragement to the love of the warrior, who stood before her, asking her to fly with him to some distant retreat, far away, where neither white man nor Indian would be apt to molest them. He would give her the choicest deer-flesh for food, dress her in the prettiest skins, and bring her plenty of presents from the hunt.

"Hello thar? What yer doin'? Don't yer feel ashamed, Minnow, to be caught a-bu'stin' love to this gal, when thar's a poor little clay-colored critter of your own tribe a-bu'stin' her heart in two for yer. Ginger and molasses!" added Kill-

Bar, throwing down his rifle from sheer vexation. "It's cruel to set a Christian to weepin', to see her married is all as after her as is the best declined to be after her!"

"Whence came the white man? His foot is light. He stole upon us like a fallen star."

"Blas and bluffs, Moscow! Now don't yer insult me with any more of yer infernal poetry. I ain't a fallen star, but jist a plain Injun and coon hunter, as can chew his meat as well as any white or red-skin livin'. Come, will yer go now with me after the Red Bar?"

The other, musing a moment, answered "Yes."

"First I must take this gal to the settlement," said Killbar. "Meantime you'd better hunt up Mankin's wife, which war in the thicket behind us, a moment since, and jist make up with her, tellin' her you intend to go after the Red Bar, after which you'll return and marry her. Then you may wait for me lyar. I'll be back in good time."

"It is well," answered the Indian.

Next morning he stood watching Killbar as he led the girl away. When the two were nearly out of sight he turned and followed them at a distance.

As they moved away, Lucy gave her hunter-friend an account of her adventures since the attack on the house. She had dashed away upon her horse to the westward, had ridden all night, and at daylight had halted to think what she should do next, when several Indians sprang from the scrub-oak near and pulled her from the saddle. The horse, frightened, dashed away, when one of the Indians, seizing her in his arms, rode off with her as mentioned, probably intending to conduct her to his camp and make a slave of her.

"My poor little girl!" said the hunter. "You seem doomed to get yourself into a good many unpleasant scrapes. I pray yer from the bottom of my heart, and hope yer'll find some one else to love."

"Speak not of that," said Lucy, her tears streaming. "I can never, never love another!"

"I war a brute to speak so. But I forget that you are entirely different from the false Indians as I've seen. Many an 'em hev married fix Indian's. I know one who hev had fourteen, and is a-lookin' forward to the time when she kin git

another! Sure spoon, whatever her other bad qualities, is different. That critter is faithful to only one, which one, unfortunately, are me!"

Lucy was about to speak, when Killbuck held up his finger to her as a signal of silence, and glanced keenly about the ground. He could discover, by the appearance of the leaves, the traces of some Indian party having recently passed that way. The fresh look of the trail at once convinced him that the party could not be more than a mile distant at the most.

He therefore struck into another route, which he hoped might, by a roundabout way, lead him to the settlement, without falling in with the savages. So many years had elapsed since his visit to the place, however, that he anticipated no little trouble in finding it. Still, he knew by the hill recently passed that it could not be more than twenty miles distant. The hill was a good landmark, but whether the settlement lay to the south-east or more to the eastward of it, he could not tell. Cautiously yet swiftly keeping on, he finally came in sight of the settlement, which consisted of about forty log-houses, a black-house, a school, a church, and one grocery store.

"Thar!" muttered Killbuck, breathing a sigh of relief. "Hyar we are, your troubles all dispated, my poor little girl! Thar's a church whar yer can go and get up tanks owin' of yer like."

Lucy smiled faintly.

"I thank you much, sir," she answered, "for your kindness; but I am very sad, and would have cared nothing if I lost my life on the way."

"You must not give 'way to sich feelings, my poor girl. Them's called the blues, and thar war a time when I war troubled with the same. I jist cured myself by takin' a run to the top of the mountains, then jumpin' off or down from a tree, tarryin' high into a lake of cold water, after which I eat three pounds of beef-her-meat, which cured me in a powerful short time. Thar's nothin' like exercise to take away 'sich feelings of all kinds. Thar war a padder chap which checked me once. I started after him, trampin' forty miles in as many minutes. When I got up to the padder chap,

the exercise had taken away all my bad feelings, so that arter jist knockin' the feller down three or four times, I was ready to shake hands with him ef he hadn't ~~come~~ ^{been} ~~out~~ ^{back}!"

By noon they had struck into a path leading straight toward the settlement. To get there the two must first descend into a hollow, fringed with thick shrubbery. Killb'ar, having reached this line of shrubbery, was about pushing it aside, so that Lucy might pass it first, when he suddenly ~~perceived~~ ^{perceived} motioning the girl back.

In the hollow, crouching down upon hands and knees, he beheld more than a hundred and fifty savages, all armed to the teeth!

CHAPTER IX.

THE TREE.

As Killb'ar gazed upon this new and strange spectacle, he concluded to strike to the left with the girl, and endeavor, by making his way through the brushwood, to get round to the settlement. Knowing, however, that the Indians must have scouts stationed in that direction, he resolved to wait some night before making the attempt. Quickly stepping back, the hunter thrust his knee in the ground, and listened intently with his ear applied to the upper end.

"Do you hear any thing?" inquired Lucy.

"Yes; *there are other Indians approaching. They will be upon us in a short time, if we keep on as we are walking.*"

He struck to the eastward to give the valley and the approaching savages a wide berth, but he had not proceeded far, before he again perceived some one watching the retreat.

"Bars and badgers! that's all right comin' this way, too! We're surrounded!"

"What shall we do?"

"We kin do nothin'," answered the hunter, as he proceeded to strew a few leaves, so as to conceal the prints of Lucy's and his feet upon the soft ground, "except to climb up ~~one~~ ^{of} these trees,"—pointing at a ~~single~~ ^{single} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~tree~~ ^{tree} ~~which~~ ^{which} ~~stood~~ ^{stood} ~~near~~ ^{near} ~~the~~ ^{the}

trunk of which was almost concealed by a wreathing vines, while the branches above were so closely interwoven as to form a screen like basket-work. "Kin yer climb?"

Lucy blushed at this question, answering that she was not used to climbing trees.

"I might have known it. You eastern gals ain't like our western kinder women, which kin climb footin'ly! Now, for instance, that's Snake-Spoon, which kin go up a tree like a winged elephant."

So saying, the hunter proceeded to pull down some of the vines clinging to the tree. Having obtained several, he soon constructed a rude ladder, by twisting and tying the twigs together.

He then climbed into a lofty branch, letting the trailing ladder with his teeth, and fastened it to the limb. Then he descended, and keeping the ladder steady, requested the girl to mount it. Lucy obeyed, and finally reached the branch in safety. Kibbar soon joined her, when, pulling up the ladder, he coiled it and secured it to a branch far up above his head.

"This 'ere cactus," he said, as he assisted the girl higher up into the midst of the natural basket-work, "this are something like the ark of olden times spoken of in the Bible. You'll pass for the holy, Miss Lucy, and if I was only of the female sex, the likeness would be almost perfect."

Lucy was unable to make the remarkance, but she said nothing.

Meanwhile Kibbar, having a sharp look out through the screen-work, soon beheld the foremost of the Indian party approaching. They evidently were scouts from the larger party in the hollow.

All, with the exception of five Cherokees, were Crees, looking anxious in their countenances. As they moved nearer to the tree, the hunter watched them closely, to see if they would ascend the trees of himself and Lucy, through the leaves on the ground.

The Indians did not, however, perceive any thing to excite their suspicions, and moved straight on toward the hollow.

Suddenly, when they had all passed, Lucy beheld her companion turn pale and draw a long breath.

What was the matter? What *could* happen to them and a man whom no danger hitherto had seemed capable of intimidating?

She watched in surprise the leader, who, taking out his handkerchief, wiped big drops of perspiration from his forehead, while now and then ejaculating, almost under his breath:

"Thar'er! ef it *aint*! Yes it *are*! Gint'ral mister!—kin it be possible? I *would* hev knowed it! Phew! ker-whoop!"

"Hark!" said Lucy. "I think I hear a step approaching!"

"You *do*! yes, yer do! I kin hear that step 'ere berry nigh off, and recognize it too! Oh thar'er! Oh thar'er! Thar's mischief brewin'!"

Soon after he spoke, another party of Indians appeared, having between them two prisoners. One was a tall man, so muffled up in a blanket that his face could not be seen; the other a woman, nearly five feet nine inches in height. She wore a flaming red or short-waisted robe, a head-dress something like an elevated nightcap, a pair of black, heavy cow-hide shoes, and carried, strapped to her back, on a small knapsack, a tin cup, a coffee-pot, and an iron cooking-utensil. Her face was rather of the masculine order, being broad in the region of delectativeness, while her dress was of a rough and ready crimson brown, betokening a long stay of service. Although her arms were tied, and there were a threatening savage on each side of her, yet she carried her head upright, with a fearless air, and marched as straight as a soldier.

Killb'ar now trotted in every direction, watching the woman closely until she had passed, when he whispered to Lucy:

"It *are* her, sure enough! I'm satisfied of that now. Oh, thar'er! Oh thar'er! Kin it be possible it *are*, and yet I *know* it *are*! That woman you saw, my little girl, was the one that was, the beautiful one, Sarah Stevens!"

"A prisoner among the Indians?"

"Yes. Thar's mischief brewin' down here. Thar's no hope of her, it is all over way from a better state of the Rocky Mountains, but the chance of deliverance we can't return her affeckshun!"

"Poor thing!" sighed Lucy. "She has got herself into great peril!"

"I s'pose," said Killb'ar, the perspiration now fairly streaming from his brow, "I s'pose, as she are a woman, I'm bound to try my best and save her, though I don't see how it's to be done!"

"Leave me and go to *her*," said Lucy.

"Wagh! Thunder! Ef I do may I be shot! No, I'm afraid the poor critter will hev to lose her h'ar!"

"Would *you* not be willing to die for one who loves you so? Why not leave me and attempt *her* rescue?"

"I kin never do that. Hello! Who hev we hyar?"

A couple of half-breeds, with axes, were approaching from the direction of the hollow.

"They're goin' to fight on sign-terrific principles, Miss Lucy. Goin' to git batterin'-rams. You kin jist believe that 'Thar's to be some tree-choppin' to-day!"

The half-breeds came within a few yards of the tree; then paused, glancing around them as if to determine which to commence at. Finally chance would have it that they should chop at the one in which were seated Lucy and Killb'ar, for this, having the largest branches, was the best adapted to their purpose.

"Hyar we are in a kind of a scrape, my little gal!" whispered the hunter. "I war in somethin' sich a one by myself, years ago, when I war Injin'-huntin' out in Kentucky. Jist as the tree war chopped down, though, thar came up a high wind, which, with the help of my buffeler-skin, sent me a-whizzin' clear over the top o' the woods to t'other side."

The half-breeds having commenced at the tree, the ring of their axes drowned the sound of the hunter's voice.

"What can we do now?" inquired Lucy. "Here come more Indians, probably to help drag the tree to the hollow."

"You're right. Ef ever head-work war required, it are now!"

He glanced round him keenly.

"We will have to give ourselves up," said Lucy. "There is no evil without the good. You will have the satisfaction of seeing Snake Spoon."

Killbar trembled.

"Phew! Thunder! If she once gets her claws on me she'll hev satisfaction!"

Crash! crack! bang! at the trunk of the tree.

The axes were making quick work of it. Already the tree began to tremble.

"It'll go in two minutes," said Killbar, coolly.

"We had better give ourselves up, then."

"No. Leastways, not while Suke Spoon are among the Injuns!" answered Killbar, again wiping his brow.

Crash! crack! bang! bang!

The tree tottered still more. Finally it gave evidence of going over in a few seconds.

Killbar sprung to his feet. Two more blows must send the tree over.

The blows were given.

"Thar we go!" muttered the hunter. "Hold on hard, Miss Lucy!"

CHAPTER X.

THE WOUND.

OMOSKI, as mentioned, had followed behind Killbar and his companion.

Through an opening in the trees, Minnie, after quitting Killbar, beheld, from a rock upon which she had seated herself, the tall form of her lover, far in the distance, standing in the same direction as the hunter and the girl.

"Omoski! Omoski!"

The words came from her in a sad wail. Then she rose.

"Once more Minnie will try. Already it is the sixth day since his departure. There is little hope."

She bounded after the Indian wanderer, and had nearly gained his side, when she beheld, crouching in the distance, a warrior of the Cree tribe, whose bow was bent, and whose arrow was pointed at Omoski.

The man's face was partly turned from her, yet she recog-

nized him as Erigo, he who had asked her to be his wife, and whom she had rejected. Bent upon vengeance, Erigo had a second time concluded to hunt for, and slay, his rival, the favored suitor of Minniho.

He had searched for him long, and at last here he was, right before him.

The girl, bent upon saving her lover, bounded forward like a deer, uttering a wild cry!

She was too late to arrest the shaft but not too late to receive it.

Poor Minniho!

The arrow struck the flesh of her side, inflicting a severe wound.

Over the blood-stained shaft she threw her mantle, so that when Omoski, hearing the noise made, turned, he saw the Indian girl coming toward him, with no sign of pain upon her beautiful face!

Ashamed to be caught thus in a covert attempt on his rival's life, and fearing that Minniho might think he was afraid of Omoski, Erigo, dashing past the girl, confronted the young chief before she could reach him!

"Dog die!" he said, drawing his tomahawk.

"Why should the Cree and the Cherokee fight?" inquired Omoski. "The hatchet is buried."

"Fight for Minniho! You have stolen her love from Erigo!"

"Omoski does not want Minniho's love!"

"Lie!"

The young warrior drew his tomahawk; a desperate fight seemed about to ensue.

On ordinary occasions the Indian maiden would not have interfered. Now, however, the case was different. She was anxious that her lover should at least return to his tribe in time for the battle which was to take place.

Therefore, throwing herself between the two, she, with flashing eyes, turned to the Cree, bidding him depart.

"Some other time the fight," she said; "not now. Go!"

Unable to persuade her to permit the combat, the Cree returned his tomahawk to his belt, saying that he hoped yet to meet Omoski in mortal fight.

When she was gone, Minniho laid both hands on her lover's shoulder, and gazed sadly and reproachfully into his eyes.

"Omiski goes toward the east. The sixth day is come!"

"Yes! Omoski thinks no more of the Red Bear!"

"The tribe will say he has turned ~~coward~~," said the girl, pressing her mantle closer over her wound, which was bleeding profusely.

Fire came to Omoski's eyes. Those of Minniho looked gladly. She believed that she had at last roused his spirit.

It was only for an instant. Again the eager glance softened. The white dove was in her lover's mind.

The girl sighed: then looked up, speaking hesitatingly—
energetically.

"See! The sun reddens westward! Omoski might almost keep pace with it! In one day he might reach the Red Bear's country!"

Again the warrior's eyes lighted: then his glance was turned eastward.

Far away, through a vista in the woods, the forms of Lucy and Killbar were visible.

Minniho, watching her lover's countenance, saw it light up with the spell which the white maiden had thrown over his heart.

"Come!" she wailed, "come!"

She caught his arm, and endeavored gently to urge him westward. He would not move.

"So, as a coward, Omoski would go back to his tribe?" she said. "What will Manitou do then? Will Omoski go to his fathers' hunting grounds, when he dies? No. He will go to a dark place, where there is neither light nor joy!"

"He cares not, so the white bird sings his war-song and fills his heart with sweet sounds!"

"Omoski!" said Minniho, solemnly, "I had a dream! Omoski's mother came to me from the grave! I saw her in the deep woods! She spoke twice! 'Oh, Minniho!' she said, 'Omoski must go to the west! Glory and honor on his return! The greatest warrior of all times! There is a white bird with small eyes, which would turn him away!'"

To follow the bird is death and dishonor! Let him not follow it, oh, Minniho!"

These words seemed to have the desired effect. Omoski had loved his mother dearly, and the dream had great influence over him.

With delighted eyes, Minniho again beheld his face kindle. Suddenly he straightened himself up.

"Omoski throws away the white bird's spell. See! he is ready to seek the Bear!"

The Indian girl clapped her hands—almost forgot her pain.

"Will Omoski go now?"

"He will wait at the stream for the white hunter's return. The hunter will guide him to the Bear before the morrow's sun shall set!"

"It is well! Oh, Minniho is glad!"

She had so much confidence in her lover's prowess, that she doubted not he would come off the victor.

They sought the stream, where, with a heavy sigh, Minniho seated herself. Then, for the first time, Omoski perceived that she was wounded.

His heart was touched by her noble fortitude. He pulled forth the arrow, washed the wound in the stream-water, and went forth bringing healing herbs.

Happy Minniho!

Her heart throbbed wildly, her glances, turned upon her lover, were full of absorbing tenderness.

The sun had wheeled far toward the west, when Minniho sank into a deep, refreshing slumber.

Omoski sat watching her awhile, when again the bright beauty of the pale-face girl flitted athwart his vision.

Obeying the impulse of his heart, he arose and glided away, resolving to get one more glimpse of Lucy Ward, before turning his footsteps westward. He had proceeded many miles, when through the shrubbery ahead of him, he caught a glimpse of female attire.

His heart beat fast.

"It is the white bird!" he muttered; **"why in the shrubbery? Is she asleep, or has she been slain?"**

With trembling steps he cautiously advanced. The dress

of the female being in shadow, he could not detect the color, but his heart told him the person was Lucy Ward.

Soon he gained the clump of shrubbery, and pushed it aside.

"Omoeki would see the white dove once in a while!" he exclaimed.

The moment he put aside the bushes he discovered that he had made a singular mistake.

Wedge between two rocks, sitting bolt upright, her knapsack shining in the moonlight, her bonnet with its yellow strings pushed defiantly from her tow-colored hair, a graven held firmly in one hand and the iron teapot in the other, was the female Suke Spoon, grimly keeping watch and ward!

The Indians in the hollow had not maintained a very close watch upon her. She had managed to untie her cords and make her escape while their backs were turned. Now they were in pursuit of her.

She had run until she was too tired to go further, and then sank down in her present position to rest, having disconcerted her pursuers by strikes which no Indian could equal.

Panting and glowing, she now turned her flame eyes upon Omoeki.

"Hoo! hoo! hoo! yer red scalp, to hunt a defenseless woman! Get out! get out! Take that, and don't try to come yer cousin' and killin' over Suke Spoon!"

As she spoke, she hurled the iron pot straight at the head of the Indian.

He dodged it and stood watching her, shrugging his shoulders with disgust.

"Ugh! ugh!"

"They're all crazy arter me!" cried Suke Spoon, jumping up and striking a defiant attitude; "and I'd never be the wife of any Inj'm, livin' or dead! So then how?"

"No want wife! How come here?"

"That's none of yer business, Inj'm! You'd better keep yer distance," she retorted, flourishing the graven. "But I swear I won't be taken alive!"

As she spoke, the footsteps of her pursuers were heard in the shrubbery not far off.

"Hyar they come—all arter me! Well, I always war a

fav'rite with the male sect. Hoo! hoo! hoo! look out, Injun!"

So saying, she stepped upon the rock, sprung straight over the Indian's head, and with a rushing, whizzing sound, went crashing through the shrubbery.

Om-ohi gazed after her a moment, and then crouched down among the bushes, waiting for the pursuing Indians to pass him.

"Funny woman," he muttered, when they had gone, with every show of disgust. "Think all men in love with her. Ugh! make great mistake!"

CHAPTER XI.

UNEXPECTED MEETING.

WHEN Lucy Ward felt the tree going over, she clung closely to the branch, expecting every moment to be dashed to pieces below.

Down went the tree, farther and farther! She closed her eyes, uttered up a silent prayer, and nerved herself to meet her fate!

All at once she felt the tree thump against something, and then stop.

She opened her eyes, to see Killbuck grinning from ear to ear, pressing hard against the trunk near the branch where he stood!

It was the pressure of his weight which had caused the tree, instead of swaying toward the ground, to incline toward another, several yards distant, and against which it had struck and was now so firmly braced, that many men must be required to move it.

The Indians turned away and sought the hollow, evidently to obtain assistance.

"That was a good trick of mine!" said Killbuck; "but not a safe manner to one which I perpetrated the other side of the mountains. Six Injuns beat me on that occasion, I just

jumped from one tree to another which was fifty yards off! It was a flyin' leap, and so amazed the Indians that they threwed themselves right down on their bellies and began a-callin' on their Man-toe!"

"Had we not better go down and escape from here before they come back?"

"Jist wait one minute!" gasped Killb'ar, trembling and clutching his branch.

As he spoke, he gazed in the direction of the hollow, whence, with a crash like an elephant's, Suke Spoon suddenly was seen to emerge, fleeing from the savages.

The latter, not wishing to alarm the settler, made no noise as they ran in pursuit; but the fugitive was not so careful.

"Yer pesky heathens!" she screamed; "ye're all after me, but yer won't hev me, seein' as I'm pledged, body and soul, to Crockery, as has trilled with my ank-shuns!"

Suke Spoon's notion that the Indians wanted her for their squaw, had been excited by the earnest glances turned on her by more than one old savage after her capture, together with the fact that no violence had been offered her.

The Indians, as will be seen, had for this reason of their own, not at all founded on affection.

Many cases of Indians falling in love with white girls had recently occurred, and having a high idea of her own charms, Suke was pleased to rank herself among the list of persecuted maidens.

Away she went, her bonnet-strings flying, making straight for the tree in which were seated Lucy and Killb'ar.

Just as she arrived beneath it, the foremost of her pursuers was within seven feet of her. She, however, most bravely escaped him, when her toes caught against a rock, and down she went, her heels flying up.

At this, Killb'ar fairly gasped for breath. Nevertheless his gallantry was excited.

"She sart'inly are a woman!" he whispered to Lucy, "and it are my duty to do something for her!"

"What can you do?"

Killb'ar quietly pulled his long hunting-knife from his

halt, and watched the foremost Indian as a cat watches a mouse.

The fellow was a hundred yards ahead of his companions, screened from their sight by the interposing brushwood between the hollow and the tree. Waiting until he was almost under him, Killb'ar, suddenly holding with each hand his knife by the handle and the point, dexterously sent it spinning downward, so that it was buried to the hilt in the throat of the savage.

As he had predicted, the Indian, with a wild cry, seized the knife, and pulling it out, hurled it away from him before he sunk dead upon the ground.

The amazement of the other savages when they arrived upon the spot to find their companion with a knife-wound in his throat and no person to be seen near him, may be imagined. It was the delay consequent upon this discovery that enabled Suke Spoon to get so far ahead, as shown, of her savage pursuers.

Having waited until the Indians had vanished from his sight, Killb'ar concluded to descend to regain his knife. The maneuver was quickly performed, but just as Killb'ar was gliding into the screenwork, his quick eye detected the heads of several savages protruding above the sides of the hollow, and he knew that he was discovered.

To remain must insure the capture of Lucy as well as of himself; to flee would enable him to draw the Indians away from the tree, and perhaps afterward to render her assistance.

He, therefore, chose the latter alternative, thus giving his enemies an idea that he was the *only* person in the tree.

Having hastily communicated his intention to Lucy, he descended and made straight for the woods, the Indians following in swift pursuit.

Killb'ar, determined to keep as near the tree as possible, plunged into a creek in his path and swam under the inter-twined roots of a tree, projecting over the water, and in the partial twilight forming a perfect screen. The savages reaching the bank of the creek, and there losing the trail, wandered at last up and down the banks. Several times they passed so near the hunter that he could almost touch them. Finally,

as darkness began to gather, the light was dimmed. Killb'ar was too experienced a hunter to venture forth yet. He waited an hour, cat-like watching the tree in which Lucy sat and which as yet had not been disturbed. He could see the top-most branches and part of the trunk through an opening in the woods.

At last he cautiously emerged from the creek.

As he did so, a dark figure rose between him and the moon!

"Yer infarnal skunk!"

And up went his knife.

"Ugh! Don't know?"

The moon fell upon the Indian's face, revealing the features of Omoski!

"Where is the white bird?"

Killb'ar hastily explained.

"Must try save! There are ghosts enough on the white girl's spirit. Must not let more come!"

"I agree with yer, perfectly. I need try to get that girl to the settlement. If you go with me I can do it. Your tribe, some of whom I see are among a lot of Indians in the forest, will not harm the girl if you say so. Still we must try to avoid 'em ef we kin!"

"Have to go long way round!"

"That are so."

"Hope not see Yellow-stripe. Ugh!"

"Who in thunder are that?"

"Don't know? Red hair! Big nose! Light—light—light—grid-grid—what you call?"

"Children! Give'er and me the best of yer protection! Won't on Sake Spoon! Hev yer seen her?"

"Yes."

And Omoski briefly explained.

The moon was now hidden by clouds.

"Come," said Killb'ar, creeping cautiously toward the tree.

"Come! now is yer time!"

Grasping the top of the tree, he whispered to Lucy to come down.

She did so, easily making her way down the twisted trunk.

"The white bird," murmured Omoski, softly.

"Come, none of yer poultry, now, Moscow!" whispered Kiltbar. "Thunder! we're seen!"

Crack! whiz! whiz! whiz! went a shower of arrows from the edge of the hollow.

Soon, however, the hunter discovered that he had made a mistake. The arrows were not discharged at the three, but at a male prisoner, who had just escaped from his dusky captors, and was speeding along toward the woods. This person Kiltbar recognized by his gray blanket as the same captive previously seen passing the tree in which were concealed the hunter and his fair companion.

The eyes of the Indians being fixed upon the fugitive, who fled in a direction at right angles with our friends, the red-men did not notice the hunter or his two companions, who now were in deep shadow.

The latter, crouching in shadowy, waited until the noises of the pursuit had passed away, before they ventured to proceed. They had not gone far, when several Indians being discovered in the distance, showed that the savages had not yet given up the idea of finding Kiltbar, as the dusky guard were evidently watching for him.

The three, therefore, cautiously made a wide détour, so as to get round the Indians unobserved.

Meanwhile the fugitive mentioned was speeding on with all his strength. He was a tall, well-made fellow, clad in tattered trousers and jacket, besides the blanket he wore, and which he had thrown over his shoulders so as to give freer play to his limbs. His face, however, was singular-looking, containing, here and there, a black patch, which gave it a hideous, and very expressive aspect. That the man had broken the thongs with which his wrists were tied, was plain from the fragments hanging from them; that he had succeeded in doing so was equally manifest; that he had succeeded in doing so was not remarkable, with such tremendous breadth of shoulders and breast as he exhibited.

On his way, taking great leaps as he proceeded, until he came unexpectedly to the edge of a gully, into which he tumbled, rolling down the side like a ball.

He was about rising to rush up the other side and keep on, when, suddenly, a hand caught him by the shoulder.

"Come in hyar, yer poor mortal! But don't yer try to make love ter me, fur I won't stand any sich nonsense, my affeckshans bein' preëngaged to Crockery!"

Almost by main strength, Suke Spoon, for it was none other than she, hauled the fugitive into a large earth-cave, concealed by long bunches of drooping grass. Over this a rivulet trickling from above, washed away all traces of any person venturing near this retreat.

A moment after entering the hollow, the fugitive could hear the Indians as they passed the cave, evidently at a loss to determine what had become of the runaway.

Having waited until she thought the savages had quitted the gully, Suke Spoon, with a half-subdued alarm, recommenced the conversation.

"So you got away, too! I'm pecky glad of it; I gived the rascals a run of it which I think will make 'em remember Suke Spoon to their dyin' day. I jist rambled 'till I war tired, when down I rolled in this 'ere gully, to find a nice little holler hyar, all ready fur me. I hev been hyar some hours, and war a-thinkin' of leavin' when I heerd you roll into the gully, and jist peerin' through the grass, I perceived by yer white and black face that yer war my fellow-prisoner. How did yer escape?"

"The Indians were a few yards off, with their backs turned to me, when, having already weakened my bonds, by sawing them across a stone, I broke them and made off!"

"Well, I do wish I war safe at the settlement, as it's that I'm in hopes o' findin' the person I'm arter."

As she spoke, Suke's eyes glared fire, and she shook the griffin, to which she had held on through her troubles, most menacingly.

"Begging your pardon, madam, I should not like to be that person!"

"Hoo! hoo! No love-makin', I tell yer!"

"I had no such intention, upon my word!"

"Well! well! That seemed to be admiration in yer eyes, at any rate. Jist keep yer sheep's glances to yer own young huns!"

The stranger bowed acquiescence, and at once turned his eyes away.

Suke, with her gridiron held on high, her huge bonnet pushed back from her red and masculine face, certainly was not a very attractive object.

An hour had passed, when a step was heard near the hollow.

The stranger, notwithstanding his semi-savage face, now showed gallantry.

"Give me that implement, madam!" he said, attempting to take the gridiron. "I will defend you, as well as I can! It is evident our retreat is discovered!"

"Hands off!" whispered Suke, sternly, "and don't yer git up quite so close to me! I ain't to be flattered, I kin tell yer. As to my gridiron, that 'are shall not quit Suke Spoon's grip, while ther's an enemy around!"

Nearer came the step.

"It is a female's," remarked the stranger.

Both listening intently, heard the step draw nearer. Finally, with her back to the cave, her soft, sad face turned upward, Minniho, the belle of the Cherokees, seated herself upon the bank.

"Om-ski! Omoski!" she moaned, and every time she uttered that name, she would rock herself mournfully to and fro.

The stranger, much impressed by her evident distress, ventured forth.

"Ha! who this?" she inquired, starting up.

The other having glanced carelessly round the moon-lighted shrubbery, to assure himself that no Indians were near, answered in a low voice:

"It matters not, my poor girl! But what ails you?"

"Om-ski gone! Leave Minniho, while asleep, and much hurt," laying her hand on her wounded side. "Wake up, see moonlight and hear birds sing very glad! Minniho no glad! Oh no! Om-ski! Om-ski!"

"He was your lover?"

"Me love much. He love, until white bird come and sing to him?"

"The white bird?"

"Yes, white-face girl! Me look all round for Om-ski, but not find! Follow white bird all time!"

She shook her head sadly: then, as if not caring to be questioned farther, rose and moved off.

"She are sart'inly a silly little goose!" remarked Sake Spoon. "Why don't she jist tar and feather the muskrat, as she called him! Don't yer think this 'ere a ~~good~~ (case) to find out whar we are?"

"I did not think of that; her grief seemed so real!"

"I, for one, will quit this place," cried the female hunter.

And shouldering her knapsack, with the pot and grilliron attached, she left the hollow.

"Are yer comin' with me, white-and-black?"

"In all gallantry I am bound to do so, muskrat!"

"Why, yer pesky impudence! Jist never mind yer gallantry! I'm an unprotected female, but virtue are all-powerful!"

So saying, she pulled the grilliron from the knapsack, and shook it fiercely at the other.

He bowed and said:

"I will not go with you, certainly, if you do not wish it."

"*That* is impudence!" cried Sake Spoon—"risk it! Hoo! hoo! hoo! Ef it wasn't fer disturbin' the Injuns, I'd pull your h'ar fer that!"

So saying she disappeared into the deep shadows of the gully, leaving the other to his own meditations.

"It will be impossible for me to reach the settlement," he thought; "the passes are all guarded. What then?"

Glancing up, he beheld what he had been watching at intervals for several minutes: a red glare upon the sky over the top of the woods in the distance. This could not be from an Indian camp-fire—the reflection being too broad and brilliant.

The red-man uses more caution in war-time. "I know it," ejaculated the watcher; "that fire must come from some of General Jackson's cavalry, encamped in the woods. The settlement will be attacked at daylight. Ah! if I can only reach the troops in time to bring them to assist those in the little garrison!"

The speaker was worn and weary with the hardships he had undergone. Nevertheless he roused himself for his task.

"Now, then: I will bring the troops or die in the attempt!"

So saying, he dove into the shrubbery, and hurried swiftly and cautiously away toward the distant light. Soon his pace

slackened: a wound, received in the hip when he was first captured by the Indians, now gave him considerable trouble. He could hardly drag himself along. Finally, down he went upon one knee. With resolute effort he rose and staggered on—then down again!

Thus, alternately rising and falling, this man urged his way determinedly, through the dark woods!

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEVENTH AND LAST DAY.

"Hist!" muttered Killb'ar, "thar he skunks right ahead!"

As he spoke, an arrow whizzed past his temple, followed by four Indians, who rushed upon the little party with tomahawks uplifted.

"It may be all up with us!" exclaimed the hunter, "and then ag'in it may not!"

So saying, he pointed his rifle at the foremost Indian, waiting, however, the result of Omoski's interference! the Indian turned and confronted the others, his eagle eye flashing on them through the darkness. They were, however, of the Cree tribe, and Erigo unfortunately was among them, having joined them after the ineffectual attempt upon Omoski's life. This fellow, recognizing the young chief by the moonlight streaming down through the branches, at once flung his tomahawk at his head, not wishing to give him a chance to speak.

The weapon just missed the young warrior, who, dodging it, threw himself upon the Cree. While the two men were struggling, Killb'ar was not idle.

Quickly went his piece, and one of the Indians, springing straight up in air, with a hollow groan, fell upon his back, shot through the heart.

Placing himself in front of Lucy, the hunter clubbed his rifle and stood ready to fight to the last.

"Yer infernal skunks! Kin yer have the heart to attack two unfortunates like this here girl and me, which has had sich

a hard time of it? 'That's no use in preachin' to sick on-christ'in rascals !'

The Indians, of course, were not at all affected by this appeal to their benevolence.

The three rushed upon Killb'ar, who, however, nimbly leaping to one side, drawing the girl after him, with his other hand vigorously wheeling his rifle round his head in a circle, brought the stock down upon the head of one of the natives with a force which knocked him senseless to the earth.

The other two now sprung with savage grants upon the white man.

One caught him by the throat, and while he was engaged in a desperate struggle with this fellow, the other, drawing his knife, would have driven it between his shoulders if a rifle, fired at this instant from an unexpected source, had not stretched the red-man lifeless upon the ground with a bullet through his brain !

At the same moment Omoski, having driven his knife to the heart of the Cree with whom he was fighting, rose to his feet.

Several minutes passed.

Killb'ar, by a peculiar movement, had sent the native with whom he was contending, head-foremost across his hip, when from the shrubbery burst forth Lucy's uncle, with others of the party who had set out from the settlement.

Explanations ensued. The party had met with several narrow escapes from the Indians since the attack. They had seen Lucy's horse, while searching for her, and had from this concluded that she had either been killed or captured.

"This mornin'," said Killb'ar, as he shook hands with Lucy's uncle, "are sart'arly unexpected. It puts me in mind of when I war out buffeler-huntin' on the plains. I war surrounded by Indians, when, gettin' desprit, I jist commenced to holler. I raised my voice clear up to the sky, and it sounded like a brass cannon. I war heard thirty mile off, and war rescued by twenty hoosiers, which comed that distance to my assistance !"

Meanwhile, before he could be captured, the Indian, thrown by Killb'ar, had risen to his feet, and was now speeding away like the wind.

"We had better make for the settlement at once," suggested Lucy's uncle. "We will fight our way thither, if necessary."

Cautiously but swiftly proceeding, the party, meeting with no further resistance, arrived in the settlement a little after midnight, and at once informed the little garrison in charge of the block-house, of the meditated attack.

As soon as possible, every available man was in the block-house, armed with such weapons as he could procure, while women and children were all huddled together behind those who were to do the fighting.

Meanwhile, many glances were turned toward Omoski, who stood apart from the others, watching with indifference the preparations for the combat.

"Whom have we here?" inquired Captain Bloomfield, of the garrison.

"An Injun friend of mine, cap.," remarked Killb'ar.

"Is he going to help us?"

"Omoski not help white man fight," answered the young warrior, with quiet dignity.

"Why are you here, then?"

"Omoski has his reasons," was the reply.

"He are in love!" exclaimed Killb'ar, bluntly. "It are perfectly astonishin', the effects of love on them as has tender hearts. When I war more youthful, I tramped it a hundred and fifty miles, jist ter see a little half-breed critter, ter which I had taken a fancy, drink a gallon of whisky, on a wager with a big Indiana hoosier! Let me see, Moscow, it are too late, now, fer yer to find the Red Bar and get his scalp?"

"Yes; Omoski soon go back to die!"

A whispered consultation now was held among the settlers, when it was resolved to arrest the young Indian and keep guard over him, that he might do no harm. Killb'ar resisted the measure, but was overruled by the others.

Just at break of day, the sentry of the garrison discovered, by the swaying of the bushes several hundred yards in front of the building, the approach of the enemy, and gave the alarm.

The men in the garrison, numbering about sixty stalwart

fellows, were instantly stationed at the loopholes, with their weapons ready.

"Hyar they come!" cried Killb'ar, as the savages, numbering at least two hundred, and composed of Cree and Cherokees, sprung up, yelling like demons, and rushed toward the gate of the garrison. Above this gate, to a jutting beam of wood, sprung Killb'ar, half a dozen of the men following him, after obtaining consent of Captain Bloomfield.

On came the savages, until within fifty yards of the block-house, when the word fire was given. There was a crash, and twenty red-men tumbled to the ground.

Over the fallen ones, however, rushed the others, making straight for the gate.

"Now, then!" exclaimed Killb'ar, "we are at the post of honor, and let us see what we kin do with them skunks. If yer take good aim," continued the hunter, in the midst of the showers of arrows and bullets whistling around him and his little band, "we kin each drop our man."

The rifles were fired and discharged with good effect. Half a dozen of the foremost Indians tumbled to earth. One gigantic savage had succeeded in reaching the gate, with a small battering-ram, evidently made from a part of the tree chopped down in the woods, and commenced pounding away at it with great force, while his comrades hurried to assist him.

They paused, however, as another volley was poured from the garrison.

At the same moment Killb'ar sprang from the top of the gate to the earth, a distance of fifteen feet, and closed with the savage battering at the gate.

"Yer infernal skunk, yer days are numbered!" he exclaimed, as, dodging a blow from the tomahawk, he drove his knife to the hilt in the red-man's breast.

The Indian fell dead.

Killb'ar's situation now was perilous in the extreme. There seemed no way for him to chamber back, before a large party of his enemies, rapidly advancing, should come upon him. With the exception of a spike in the gate, about ten feet above the ground, the wood-work was perfectly smooth.

"Keep yer places thar!" exclaimed the hunter, coolly, to some men who were about jumping down to his assistance from above. "Yer'll all be needed thar whar you are, before long. Yer kin believe *that*!"

So saying, not seeming to mind bullets or arrows any more than if they were so many peas, Killb'ar drove his knife firmly into the wood-work about the light of his knee. Then, with a nimble spring, he placed his right foot upon it, thus being enabled to reach with his hand the spike above his head. Grasping this firmly, he drew himself near enough to the top of the gate to be drawn up by several men, who caught him under the shoulder.

Not a moment too soon; for the next instant a long arrow struck the gate exactly in the place which had been occupied by the hunter's body.

"A narrow escape!" cried several.

"Not a circumstance to a narrerer which I met with once t'other side of the mount'ins. I war thar fightin' with an Injun, when another got behind me, and war about to plunge his knife in my back, when, my steam bein' up to the b'ilin'-pint, my own knife jist jumped out of my belt and walked right into the stomach of t'other skunk! That war the last of him, arter which I licked the other Injun so bad that he run away as if his Man-toe war arter him!"

By this time Captain Bloomfield had succeeded in getting a couple of old nine-pounders, well loaded with slugs, to the top of the inclosure.

These were pointed at the savages, who thereupon came to a sudden halt.

Bloomfield was about giving orders to fire, when, between the Indians and the garrison, the red-men stationed, to prevent this, and thus gain time for another assault, an object which did not fail of arousing much interest and excitement.

No wonder, for this person was none other than SUKE SPOON!

Yes, she had been recaptured by the Indians, and was now to be used as a go-between, to prevent the white men's firing on their enemies.

Notwithstanding the peril of her situation, there was no

sign of fear in the face of dauntless Suke! There she stood, gazing half defiantly toward the garrison, her bonnet thrown back, her gray, catlike eyes flashing lightning, her long gown rustling in the wind.

"See hyar!" she shrieked, "you in the garrison! Fire away! This are a female hoosier, which aren't afraid of gunpowder, nor nothing else. Never mind of yer bullets do riddle me; I'm—"

She suddenly paused, catching a glimpse of the familiar form of Killb'ar upon the top of the gate.

Previously cool and self-possessed, this man now showed signs of trepidation, and half turned as if to rush back into the garrison.

"Hoo! hoo! hoo! Thar ye are, the one I've seeked so long. You've trifled with my affeckshuns, built up on the halter of this buzzum! How kin yer hev the face to stand thar right before me arter all that!"

As she spoke, she rushed toward the gate, but was caught and forced back by the Indians before she had taken ten steps.

"Thar, thar! I'm a pars'cuted feminine, sartainly! Oh! what kin equivalent the female heart when torn by diversity and falsehood! I'll hev satisfaction! I must hev satisfaction! I'll pull his ha'r all out of his head!"

She, with a powerful effort, broke from those who held her and flourished her gridiron. Soon, however, she was again seized.

Captain Bloomfield was troubled and perplexed. The Indians now began pouring showers of arrows and discharges of rifery upon the block-house.

So well aimed were the missiles, that three of his best men were badly wounded, and one man killed outright, an arrow having passed through the loop-hole by which he was stationed and penetrated his eye, passing into his brain.

With a wild scream he fell dead upon his back, his glazed eyes turned upward, his form quivering in the agonies of death. It was a sad sight to see the mother and sister of the dying man rush to his side and gaze upon his writhing features. They knelt by him, they wound their arms round him, showering kisses upon his pale lips, his forehead and his eye-

lids, and wildly calling upon his name as if they thought this could retain the fading spark of life a few moments longer.

The poor fellow breathed but three words before he lay cold before the loving twain. Even then, his mother, with her gray hair streaming all round his face, wildly called upon his name. It seemed as if she could not realize that he was really dead—lost to her forever!

The poor fellow, a fine healthy young man when he entered the block-house, had, a few days previously, proposed to a young girl, who had promised to become his wife in a week. This girl was in the rear of the block-house, where several of her sex were gathered, tending the wounded, when the sad news of her lover's fate was brought to her.

She was a tall, queenly lass, whose upright carriage and flashing black eyes betokened a high spirit, which was evinced the moment she received the dreaded tidings. Up she sprang, her whole frame quivering with excitement, her cheeks flushed, her nostrils dilating, her eyes gleaming fire!

"Dead! dead!" she shrieked; "ah, no! surely you do not mean this! Oh, my God! if it be true—if it be true, the red-men shall pay dearly for the deed!"

So saying, she clenched her white teeth, and with a few bounds cleared the space between the rear of the block-house and her lover's body.

Over that dead form she knelt, bestowed several kisses upon the cold lips, then, grasping the rifle her lover had dropped, proceeded to load it.

"I will pay the red-men for this!" she cried in a low, hoarse voice—"yes, I will pay them for it!"

Having loaded the piece, she took careful aim, and firing, sent an Indian sprawling dead upon his face.

She was about loading again, when Captain Bloomfield, with several men, led her away.

Unfortunately the cunning Indians had now formed in double file, so that no shot could be fired from the garrison without a chance of hitting Sake Spoon. Yelling, exulting at the cessation of the settlers' fire, the red-men came on, still keeping the tall female prisoner in advance, rushing toward the gate.

Meanwhile, not a soldier dared to disturb his place, from fear of his bullet's striking Sake Spoon.

In this dilemma, Killbar suddenly recovered his resolution. Having reloaded his rifle, he commenced firing in such a dextrous manner as to *hit the Indians over the head of Sake*.

"Oh! Crookery, yer deceiver!" screamed the excited Indian, shaking her griddle at the hunter, "suppose one of yer shots should tar this lacerated spirit! Hoo! hoo! ker-*boom*! boong! If I once git my hands on yer, I'll make every hair stick straight up!"

The sweat came out on the hunter's brow. It was plain that he was not indifferent to Sake's remark.

"She are sartinly a 'Tatar,'" he remarked; "there are somethin' about her which to me are terrible and just a little mortifyin'. Her voice are not the sweetest, but it's *strong* like an owl's, while her eyes are like *song-birds*. I always war afraid of sich when in the heels of the *terrible* snow, and I don't like to get in front of 'em, when it's possible to keep it."

It was evident that Sake could not hear what Killbar said. Nevertheless, she judged, by the expression of his face, that the words he spoke were not complimentary to herself.

She shook her fist at him, and her piercing voice was again heard.

"Oh, ef I git hold of yer, I'll make yer square. There'll be no cure for the *lul-lies* which I shall leave upon yer head. To think that I tramped it all the way from *another* side of the mountains to see yer, goin' through sich *comps* as noight have appalled any dookit for dook or my *own* soul, yet that yer don't deprecate me in the least! There's no hope for lovely women on this *murder* sphere, and for my wrongs that I intend to inflict *character* upon yer!"

"What have you done to this woman?" inquired some of the men, turning to the guide.

"Nothing except what any honest fellow might have done. I hev a wife of my own, you see, but during my *lul-lin'* and trappin' excursions, before I married the one I speak

of, I met Sake Spoon one mornin' a-hocin' potatoes in her garden. As she looked up, I bid her good-day, and jist asked for a drink of water, which she gived me.

"Arter that I sat down, and she began a-chattin' to me. Then her dad come out and began a-chattin', too. He talked a long time, then invited me in, which I didn't refuse.

"That was the way our acquaintance commenced. Sake's dad invited me to call often, and I promised I would. Arter that, on one occasion, I saved the life of Sake from an Injun, which war about to take her life. The Injun had his tomahawk up to strike her, when I jist druv my fist down his throat, and at the same time gave him a powerful knock with the other fist, which war a settler. He lay still a minnit until jist as I war a-pullin' out my knife, when he jumped up and rampered off, makin' big licks. From that moment Sake seemed to think I was serious in my intentions upon her, and that, you see, war the cause of the many persecutions to which I hev been subject, since I married another."

As Kill'ar spoke, he lifted his rifle and took good aim at a tall savage who had laid his hand on Sake's shoulder, probably with the intention of silencing her tongue, which was still sending volley after volley at the hunter.

The report of the hunter's piece now rung out sharply upon the air, but the Indian had seen the weapon as it was pointed at him, and, dodging jist as the guide pulled the trigger, he avoided the bullet, which, however, struck his scalp-lock, carrying it clean from his head as if it had been shaved off.

"Ugh!" grunted Onocki, who, from the interior of the black-horse, was a spectator of this shot, "white man good fire; never saw fire before like that!"

"If it had been his head that went off, it would have been better—eh, Injun?" remarked one of the settlers.

Onocki's eyes flashed fire, but he said not a word. It was evident, however, that had his hands been free, he would have brained the speaker.

"I never war afraid of mortal man, exceptin' Sake, that she-devil thing!" muttered Kill'ar, as he aimed his rifle for another shot.

Bang! went the piece, and with a scream that pierced all ears, ringing clearly above the yells of the savages, down went Suke Spoon, her hand upon her heart!

"You've done it, now!" said one of the settlers. "She's a gone case! I knowed you couldn't keep up such firing as that long without hitting her."

Killb'ar, however, coolly firing another shot, seemed perfectly indifferent as to the catastrophe which had happened. The only remark he was heard to make was this:

"Well, Suke had her good parts, although she war different from most wimmen in respects!"

Over the body of the fallen one sprung the natives, making a simultaneous dash toward the block-house.

Captain Bloomfield now ordered the gunners to discharge the two pieces of artillery.

All were confident that these would at least hold the savages in check, if they did not scatter them.

The gunners applied their torches at the command to fire.

There was a hissing sound; a cloud of smoke rose from the vent-holes, but the pieces would not go off! The powder was damaged!

The screams of the savages grew louder. A large body of them, rushing at the gate, now forced it open, in spite of all efforts to dislodge them.

The women in the garrison screamed. Their defenders plied their muskets vigorously, but it was evident that the savages pouring through the gate, would soon be upon them, and make all victims to a merciless slaughter.

Foremost among those who defended the block-house, was Killb'ar.

One moment firing, the next using his knife to great advantage, the hunter, heedless alike of bullets, arrows and tomahawks, conducted himself in a manner which, in spite of their great peril, excited the wonder and admiration of all present.

At one time the brave fellow found himself attacked at once by four Indians. He retreated a couple of paces, and as the foremost two of his adversaries made a dash at him, he threw out a leg, tripping one over, while, with his clubbed rifle, he

laid another deal at his feet. To run his knife through the throat of the other, as he was rising, was the work of a moment, after which he again wielded his piece, knocking senseless another savage.

Now the others pressed him close. One hurled his tomahawk, which, however, the hunter dodged with marvelous celerity, and then, dashing suddenly forward, drove the stock of his rifle against the stomach of the fellow, thus knocking him down upon his back.

Meanwhile, one of the savages had come up behind him, and in a second it would have been all over with him, but for the stout-hearted settler girl who had lost her lover, and who now, taking good aim, sent a bullet through the brain of the Indian.

Now Killbar, dashing at the other, grasped him by the throat, and down went the two, rolling over and over in a desperate struggle.

The Indian was a stalwart fellow, greatly exceeding his adversary in size, but the guide made up for this by superior agility and skill. Trained to Indian fighting, he knew every weak and strong point connected with this sort of combat, and was not slow to take advantage of it.

By this time the two were a little apart from the others, so that the hunter had the red-man all to himself. He waited until the Indian had partially succeeded in getting clear of his (Killbar's) clutch, when, having purposely permitted this, he raised his knee almost to his chin and dealt the savage a kick in the breast, which sent him rolling over and over, bewildered and almost senseless. To spring to his feet was then, with the guide, the work of a single instant. The next he was upon the prostrate man with his knife buried to the hilt in the fellow's bosom!

A moment after he was among the settlers, fighting with might and main.

"Well done! well done!" sounded on all sides, as the brave fighter, placing himself at the head of a party of the stoutest settlers, dashed at the Indians with an impetuosity which caused them to retreat backward.

Soon, however, the little band of whites was fired upon, and with yells of exultation, the Indians, like a dark mass of

fiends, were about pouring into the black-house, when a crash as of thunder was heard without. The air was filled with flying bullets, the tramp of hooved hoofs, the clanging of sabers, the shouts of officers and cheers of men were heard.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Killb'ar, springing over the body of a savage whom he had dashed down with the butt of his rifle, "ef it ain't Jackson's cavalry!"

He was right; the wounded messenger had with much difficulty contrived to reach the cavalry camp in the woods, and bring troops to the assistance of the settlers at a very critical moment.

Dashing upon the savages, the horsemen, full three hundred in number, soon sent the Indians scampering off in all directions!

As they retreated, each of the cavalrymen as were not pursuing, sprung from their horses and were striking hands with those whom they had so opportunely rescued.

"Well done, boys!" exclaimed Captain Mansfield; "a thousand thanks to you and your gallant commander. Have you had any fighting before, since coming into this State?"

"Nothing to speak of," answered the captain of the cavalrymen, "only a little brush with a party of Seminoles, whom we met on the way, about thirty miles or so below. We were all sitting around our camp-fire, you see, when suddenly the red rascals sent a shower of arrows and bullets into our midst. Luckily, no person was killed, although one man was slightly wounded in the shoulder. If there we could mount our horses, the Indians were upon us, and I think it would have fared hard with us but for our leader, a lad not more than thirteen years old, who suddenly set up a loud shout, singing out, 'Here they come! here they come, a hundred more of our brave fellows!'

"The lad, a little ways apart from the rest of us, had not yet been seen by the savages, so that he had an opportunity of blowing a number of terrific whistles upon his horn, which added to the consternation of our foes, who believed that reinforcements were really advancing to our relief. Away they scampered, the red villains, thus giving us a chance to mount and

make a dash after them. We slashed at them, right and left, with our sabers, and fired many good shots with our revolvers, thereby killing and wounding a number before they could escape us. We saw nothing of them after that, which was two days ago, unless indeed a portion of them may be among those whom we have just attacked."

"I doubt not there were," answered Captain Bloomfield, "for I am certain there was a mixture among the fellows of Creeks, Seminoles, and some other tribe, probably Cherokees."

While this conversation was going on, a scene of a peculiar nature was taking place outside the block-house.

No sooner had the Indians quitted the field than the gigantic form of Snake Spoon was suddenly seen to rise up and confront one or two astonished cavalrymen, who were in the rear. She rose, and folding her arms over her chest, stood quietly surveying the astonished horsemen, one of whom at once reined in his steed.

"I could have sworn I saw you lying on the field when we first made our charge upon the Indians!" exclaimed the man.

"So you did!—so I war; but I've risen, like Lazerum, about which we read in Scripture, to take revenge on Crookery, the deceiver, the introductor of woman's kind afflictions!"

"Ho! ho! ho! My dear girl, what are you talking about?"

"Don't *dear* me, yer lynx-eyed yersey lars! I ain't to be *dear'd* by yer sort with impertinency! So jist git out of the way! I warn't *dear'd*; jist *pretend'd*, that's all, so that the sogers might fire!"

No saying, she ran across the field into the block house.

"Hyar yer are! Oh, hoo! hoo! yer deceiver! I'll thump yer lars! I'll tar yer hair out by the roots! I'll teach yer to play upon the follies of a virtuous female!"

With hair and bonnet flying—with glitteron flourished high in one hand, her other tightly clenched, Snake Spoon, tall, GAUNT, and in as good a state of health as ever, now came

running through soldiers, sailors and women, toward KIMBLAY who, surrounded with smoke and powder, stood leaning upon his long rifle, grinning.

At sight of Sake, the hunter showed no astonishment, although he did evince considerable trepidation. He turned as if to flee, but perceiving that it was too late, seemed determined to make the best of his situation.

"How yer do, Sake Spoon?" he said, calmly, extending his hand; "I knew my bullet didn't hit you; I know yer faked down war all a trick! You're a noble gal, Sake, so far as fortune, heroes, and sich is concerned!"

She looked at him fiercely, as if she thought he was merely flattering in order to turn her wrath from his beloved head.

"None of that pesky nonsense, Crackery!" she exclaimed; "ther war a time when I might have listened to sich honeyed words with patientin' huzzar, but that time are now gone past, and I doubt of it long over again. The love which I once felt for yer can only be renewed by yer makin' the sacrifices which it are yer duty to make, considering how yer encouraged me to believe that yer intended war serious!"

"I never encouraged yer! Ther never war a time, I kin remember, that I said a word to make yer think that I meant to hev the knot tied!"

"Crackery! oh, Crackery! of the both war to open and swallow yer, this minit, I don't think it would be any more than yer might have reason to expect after tellin' sich lies as them! Ther war one time, I kin remember a time—when the stars were twinklin' in heaven, and the flowers war a-bloomin' ther sweet hymns in the swamp, that yer came to me and told me that my hair war blinder than glimmering water, and my eyes lovelier than pebbles, scattered in the sand!"

"That war nothin'; I said that merely out of complacent, and not that I meant any thing sweet by the same!"

"And I by yer side! Oh, yer varmint! What kin equal the culpable notion of sich men as are after the destroyin' of woman's most precious jewel—the modesty which I revealed

her declarin' the love which are a-burnin' in her heart, like hot pokers a-burnin' holes in wood!"

"Now then, Sake, I beg that yer remain calm. Yer kin, if yer choose, and I hope you will choose. Thar are certain pake-darrits of yer sex which are charmin' to behold, and modesty are one of those; modesty I have always found in you, Sake Spoon, more than in any others of yer set! Thar is a kind of shakin' modesty, which are very, very prettish, and which you sartainly hev to putch-hin, along with yer good looks!"

The compliment had no softening effect.

Sake came on, caught the hunter by the hair of the head, and commenced dealing him a succession of tremendous blows upon the back with her an-iron.

"Thar! thar! thar! Oh, yer may squirm; yer may twist; I'm bound to hev satisfaction, of thar's law in the land! You war a parfet rascal to trifle with a promised young gal like me as would make any man a good wife! Take that, and that, and that THAR! I'll get breeched of promise of thar's law in the land!"

Still belabored, the hunter finally made a powerful effort, and breaking away, soon disappeared from the black-house.

Sake came rushing out, to just catch a glimpse of him as he vanished in the wood.

She ran, hoping to overtake him, her bonnet-strings and hair flying in the wind.

Meanwhile, Killdeer, turning, caught sight of her coming after him, and redoubled his speed. He bounded ahead, with the swiftness of a roe, and had soon disappeared from the vision of Sake Spoon in the deep shadows of the woods. Still, however, she followed, until her dress catching at last a snag, she was thrown flat upon the ground.

"Thar are sartainly an addit'nal to my wares!" she exclaimed, sitting herself up, and rocking to and fro, "I have collected the pretty deceiver, it seems, for to skink a station which are both pokier and modish!"

In fact her dress was badly torn, disclosing ankles and feet of a size which were more than a match for her other stupendous proportions.

While she was still giving vent to her grief and anxiety, there was a step behind her, and, turning, she beheld Minniho, the beautiful Indian girl, who stood, as if about to beat a retreat.

"Hello! Injun gal!" exclaimed Sake, springing to her feet, "what hev I brought you hyer again? Ain't yer loved that lover of yours yet, and a-didn't him a good person? In'?"

"No find," answered Minniho, sadly. "Ah! 'frail no more—'frail been kill by white man!"

"That's whar yer are mistaken. What kind of a heathen chap war yer lover, and what war his name?"

"Omiski! Eye like eagle, form like mountain pine. No Injun like him!" she uttered, proudly.

"He are all right!" cried Sake; "I saved him inside the block-house, safe and unharmed. He war a prisoner until the fight was over, when he war set free!"

"Oh, Minniho very glad!"

"Ef you take my advice, you will pardon him for tarryin' arter some other gal, especially one that are not his own color. I saw him a-custin' some o' our gals at first, but he soon found out that it war no use, as I didn't give him the slightest encouragement, which certainly moved him mighty bad!"

Minniho, eyeing the speaker keenly, seemed to understand her character at once.

She merely shrugged her shoulders with a mixture of pity and contempt.

"Like to see Omoski again! No hy hand on Omoski! Omoski no squaw; he fight with brave warrior, and Minniho look up to him as she look up to pine on mountain rock."

"Ef you look up to him that way, you are a pretty fool! You'll git no thanks for it—nothing! But he'll be here in the end, which are the way of the male and to them we give 'em encouragement."

"Omoski's voice is sweet to Minniho!" answered the girl; "his voice falls upon her spirit like the tinkling of bells with the sweet bells on the white man's church! If he loved her she would be content!"

With these words, she turned and entered Sake, who gazed after her with an expression of crowded joy.

"That goes one of them poor little children, who are always a-dying that poor yellow skin has as kin never grow upon this land any more than radishes and turnips kin grow in red clay! Oh! when will the little be soot be *resuscitated* from skin *ghosts* as to make's the *luzz* was?"

Meanwhile On-ki, now free, stood, heedless of the hubbub of voices around him, watching with a admiration the pale, beautiful countenance of Lucy Ward, seated upon a bench by the side of her uncle, who was talking to several of his friends.

Suddenly a quick step was heard approaching; through the crowd of officers and soldiers a fine-looking young man—none other than the man who had brought the troops thither, but with the black patches now washed from his face—made his appearance in front of Lucy.

The latter gave one wild cry of joy; then sprung up, and fell almost fainting into the arms of the young man, crying:

"Mark! Mark! it is he! Thank God! thank God! Not dead after all!"

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

In a few words the young man explained.

He had set out on his journey at a good pace, to bring the minister, who was to marry him to Lucy. He had not proceeded more than five or six miles, however, when he came upon certain signs, showing that Indians had recently passed that way. The signs, though minute, such as the displacing, here and there, of a twig by the movement of the body, and the faint impression of marks upon the ground, were sufficiently plain to the practiced eye of Mark Winton.

On discovering the signs, he hesitated a few moments, thinking whether he had better advance or retreat.

Finally he concluded that he would go back, to procure arms with which to defend himself in case of attack. Accordingly, turning his horse's head, he was about retracing his way, when suddenly he caught sight of the keen eyes, glittering like fire-flies, of a couple of savages, otherwise screened from his sight, gleaming from a clump of shrubbery upon his right.

To betray his knowledge of their vicinity would be ruin, said his fate at once. He mastered all his resolution to keep a calm face, giving no sign of the discovery he had made, meanwhile permitting his horse to keep on at its usual pace. Then, carefully thrusting his hand in his belt-pocket, he caught at the handle and opened the blade of a large game-knife he carried, and which, in the event of his coming to close quarters, might help him defend himself.

On went the horse, and soon passed the very clump of shrubbery in which the Indians were concealed. Now was a critical moment.

Mark's whole body was covered with perspiration as he passed that bush, expecting every moment to feel the deadly tomahawk cleave his skull.

This did not happen. He kept on, and having passed the bush, believed that he could now escape. Almost unperceptibly, he suddenly urged his horse forward at a trot, and, turning as he did so, to see a couple of rifles protruding from the bush!

Bang! went one of them, and down went his horse, rearing upon its hind legs, while a stream of blood gushed from the side of its head, which had been perforated by a bullet. Mark, springing from the saddle, just in time to save himself from being crushed to death, and took to his heels, leaving his foot catching in some vines, trailing along the ground, until he was pulled, feet upon his face. Before he could regain his feet, the two Indians were upon him. One raised his tomahawk, which he seemed on the point of using, when the other grasped his arm.

They concluded to make him prisoner: his arms were secured with their own deer-horns, and he was led off to a place, to which the Indians seemed to be, while upon their tomahawks they proceeded to scoop, in a small natural hollow, a

place large enough for the reception of the dead horse, which it was evident they did not wish to remain unburied, and thus afford a clue to the prisoner's fate. The hollow was soon dug, the horse was, with much difficulty, rolled in and buried, with leaves and twigs so artfully arranged as to resemble a natural clump of shrubbery and conceal the animal. Afterward Mark was conducted to the Indian camp, in which he found a negro, voluntarily a slave, who had long before disappeared in an unaccountable manner, from the settlement in which Mark was born.

The slave, recognizing him, resolved to help him to escape. He came to the lodge at night, bringing him a piece of burnt wood to blacken his face, and an old blanket, such as was worn by the negro himself. Thus disguised, Mark, on a dark night, contrived to get past the Indian guard, who mistook him for the negro. On the previous day, the young man had made the negro in return for his kindness a present of a *ring*, which had been much admired by the black.

"Well," continued the narrator, "I *don't* think I should escape, but I had not proceeded many miles when I was recaptured by the Indians, who then informed me that they had forced the negro to own that he had connived at my escape, and had then **BURNED HIM ALIVE IN A HOLLOW TREE !**"

At this, glances of intelligence were exchanged between Lucy and her uncle.

"It is plain now," exclaimed Mr. Ward, "how the mistake regarding that body found in the hollow tree, was made?"

"Yes," replied Lucy, "and oh! thank God! that it was *not* Mark, after all!"

"We, indeed, have reason to be thankful!" answered her uncle.

"I certainly have," replied Mark, although I feel very sorry for that poor negro who befriended me! The Indians told me that he made frantic endeavors to escape them. One time he clambered far up into the branches of a lofty tree and there lay upon his belly, thinking that his pursuers did not see him. The Indians agreed, however, for the sake of torturing their intended victim, as the cat tortures the mouse, to pretend that they did *not* see him. Therefore they all sat

down under the tree, and commenced to talk on various subjects, secretly enjoying the secrecy and suspense of the poor fellow above them. They remained thus for several hours, when they rose and moved away as if to pass on. This, however, was only a feint; they went out of sight of the window and screened themselves among some thick bushes, whence they could, unobserved by the object of their ruse, watch his every movement. Soon they saw him descend from the tree, peer cautiously around and then set out upon a run. This deception had now been carried far enough. With a wild whoop, they started after him, and were soon close upon him. Then they slackened their pace that he might gain further headway, allowing him finally to vanish almost from their sight. At this point, they increased their speed, and in a short time were near enough to see him crawl into the hollow tree. They now breathed out the poor fellow's softness by resting themselves and quietly watching this tree. Wondering that its occupant did not emerge therefrom, they proceeded to the hollow trunk, when they found the space so closely jammed that he could not extricate himself!

At this they set up an exultant shout, then proceeded to leap dry logs round the tree and light them. The rest is well known to you."

The young man had flushed his narrative when Susan bowed her way to the side of Lucy Ward.

"See hyar, young gal!" she exclaimed, "yer won't be j-dots of I tell yer that I hev good reason to believe that this young man, while with me in the woods, would not propose to me if I had encouraged him! I could see it in his eye, but thanks to my devotion, which is very proper, I was love-proff! I tell yer this, because I like to show up the male sex, and save all chaps from being misled even as mine war!"

So saying, she turned away, leaving Lucy perplexed and Mark somewhat indifferent. The young man, however, soon succeeded in convincing the girl of his worth. By and by, smiling, with joy in her soft eyes, Lucy was now a chosen girl.

"We will be very happy!" cried Mark, shyly squeezing her hand.

"Ah, yes, happier than words can express!" answered the girl. "It all seems to me like a dream: a little while ago mourning you as dead, and now finding you alive and well! Even now," she added, smiling, "it almost seems to me as if I am seated by the side of a *ghost*!"

"Do I look so very much like a ghost, then?" inquired Mark.

And as he spoke he gave proof of his being real flesh and blood by bestowing an emphatic kiss upon Lucy's parted lips.

"Oh, Mark!" she murmured, glancing round, however, to perceive that they were not noticed.

"Now, then, when shall we be married?" he inquired.

"As soon as you please."

"Immediately, then!"

"Oh, no! I did not mean so soon! Why, I have not even had time to comb my hair!"

While the lovers were conversing, Omoski stood watching them askance.

The attitude of the Indian, at this juncture, would have formed an excellent study for a painter. Thus he stood, his head half bowed, his arm drawn sideways, his face strangely impassive, while in his eyes was an almost deathlike expression of despair! It was by the eye alone that Omoski showed his feelings, yet it would have required a good judge of character to detect the feeling against in the mind of this Indian.

"Love! love!" he muttered to himself. "The white bird has found her mate, and they can sit, basking in sunshine, while Omoski's spirit is as black as a cloud when there is neither sun nor moon."

"Well, Indian, what do you say?" remarked Captain Bloomfield, advancing and stepping the red-man on the back, "will you go back to your work, or shall we keep you here in the settlement? You seem to be a friendly Indian enough, and I do not care to harm you."

Omoski started as if an arrow had struck him.

"Omoski will go back to the woods!"

"Very well. I hope you will not join those rascally fellows of your tribe, who attacked the settlement!"

"The Indian's soul will never join theirs in the hunting-grounds!" answered the young warrior, gloomily, and strode away.

He moved only a few paces, then sat down, still bent to leave the vicinity of the "white bird," as he had called her. He sat a long time, now and then watching the two advance, while dark thoughts mingled with his sadness.

Meanwhile Lucy and her lover seemed oblivious of his presence. They were still conversing together, as if there were no persons but themselves in existence.

A savage idea seemed suddenly to glide into the Indian's mind, and his hand sought the hunting-knife in his belt. He moved cautiously toward the couple, and was soon close behind them. Then he paused a moment, as if irresolute, after which he turned away, and resumed the seat he had quitted. There he sat, musing for several minutes, when he rose.

"The white bird will never answer me to the Indian. Never again speak to Onoski! Why stay? He will go to his tribe and meet his disgrace! Not in the light—not seeking the Red Bear! It is all over with the Indian! His sun has set! The last day is done! He will never go to the hunting-grounds! Farewell!"

Thus muttered Onoski, as he turned his golden eyes resolutely away from the block-house and moved toward the forest.

Suddenly he paused, and half turned, a fierce light in his eyes, as if with some deadly purpose. His hand sought his rifle: he half lifted it with lowering brow, his dark gaze turned toward Lucy and her lover, who were passing just the gate toward her uncle's residence.

Then he changed his mind.

"Why grieve the white bird! Her mate has come back to her! Let her be happy!"

Moving on, the Indian again felt the spell of the young girl upon him. He half turned, looking upon his rifle, a melancholy gleam in his dark eyes.

After a few moments Lucy and her lover disappeared from his sight.

"Come! The sun—the light—the stars are out! Onoski's heart is dark!"

He moved on a step further—paused—again turned.

"Never sing to Omoski—no, never!"

And this time he resolutely plunged into the woods.

He had not proceeded much further, when up from the brushwood started a female form, her eyes wild—her face thin—her hair drooping all round her shoulders.

It was Minniho!

"Where goes Omoski?"

"To his tribe!" answered the Indian, gloomily.

"He will die! Go not!"

"What? Minniho think Omoski fears the tomahawk?"

The Indian was dark with anger.

"No. Omoski *fears* nothing! But Minniho begs him to go away off with her to some distant forest! Oh, she would then be glad. She would sing to him! She would never desert him!"

The dark eyes were turned up softly and humbly, the arms crossed meekly over the bosom, the voice full of melody.

"No!" answered the Indian; "he loves not the dark bird's song."

An expression of agonizing pain came over the girl's face.

"Try to love—*try* to love!" she murmured, beseechingly.

"No."

"Minniho will be very good to Omoski! She will be like a little child! She will make a happy wigwam for him! She will make him better moccasins than any *other* girl can make. The deer's meat shall always be to his taste!"

"No!"

"The game shall be plenty. She will go forth with him and not let him carry the heavy deer or buffalo-meat. She will carry all his burdens."

"No."

"She will talk to him and sing to him when he is sad. She will make his rifle shine with the white powder."

"No."

Vainly the girl pleaded. Omoski, with long, steady strides, walked deeper into the forest.

Minniho followed, with grief-stricken face.

In about three hours, the two suddenly came upon a party of Cherokees, seated in a clearing in the woods.

Among them was the old chief, Omoski's father, and the hunter Kill'ar, who had been captured just as he was about wheeling round to return to the settlement.

At sight of the young Indian, who exhibited not the slightest emotion at seeing the white captive, Omoski's father advanced and laid his hand on his son's shoulder.

"Seven suns have set. Where is the Red Bear's scalp?"

"Omoski has broken his word."

"Why was he not with us in the fight?"

"A white bird held his heart."

"Omoski is disgraced. He must die!" exclaimed the old man, with unfaltering voice. "Comigo's own hand must deal the death-blow!"

"It is well!" answered Omoski.

As he spoke, the tribe's prophet was seen to make his appearance.

"What says Out-way-na-ha?" inquired Comigo; "Is it well to kill the young warrior, now, or wait for another sun?"

"Out-way-na-ha will go and talk to the Great Spirit," answered the prophet, as he held out off.

"See-lyar!" exclaimed Kill'ar, "if you are capable to hold one of your infernal pow-wows, let it be as quick as possible, as I have some curiosity to know what in the end you intend a-look' with me. So hurry up you chiefs!"

"Stop speak!" exclaimed Comigo, turning to the prisoner; "if not, quick kill!"

"You kin jist go ahead as soon as you like!" returned Kill'ar; "that's little comfort in look' in a situation like the present, which are distracting! One thing is certain, I'd sooner be burned to brimstone and in the flames than taken with that big she elephant, Sake-Spoon, which are after me with sich powerful gumption!"

The prophet uttered his rude songs, whereas the most dismal sounds were heard to proceed.

"With all due respect for such ceremonies, however!" remarked Kill'ar, "the noises are something like that made by a lot o' pig, rhinoceros, &c. &c. I hope that Out-of-the-way

or whatever you call him, will come out of that are lodge, before long!"

The noises grew louder, every moment. Finally they increased to the most dreadful shrieks, mingled with chants and peculiar notes, as of many guttural voices all talking together.

The faces of the Indians without were expressive of the most solemn awe and respect, as they listened. Hushed together, they all stood, exchanging glances, but not venturing to speak a word. The solemnity of the scene was finally broken upon by Killbar, who suddenly kicked his legs, impatiently.

"Ker-whoop!" he exclaimed, "them are sart'ly the most outrageous noises that ever greeted the ear of a Christian. Thar war a time once when I war upon a rock, surrounded by one thousand red-skins. Thar they war, all a-shriekin' and howlin' together arter my skin, when the thought struck me that I'd jist set up a howlin' too and see which could howl the loudest. To do this, I stood upon my toes, and jist pullin' myself out, raised my voice so tremendously powerful that a couple o' trees, not far off, were torn up by the roots and the hair of the Indians begun a-droppin' out o' thar heads! Well, that was a good thought o' mine, for the varmints soon begun a-droppin' off with such speed as were never seed by any Indian before!"

Just as Killbar concluded, the prophet came rushing forth from the lodge, his eyes rolling in his head, his whole face convulsed as if by a spasm.

"Ker-whoop, yer old skunk! Now, then, out with it!"

The old man, leaning against the trunk of a tree, now poured forth a perfect volley of words in the Indian tongue, of which Killbar comprehended enough to know that he was asking for the execution of Onoski at once.

"You are a thirsty old varmint!" exclaimed the latter.

Comigo, however, at once unslung his tomahawk.

"The shorter Comigo strikes the better," said Onoski, quietly.

So saying, he threw down his rifle and tomahawk, and stood awaiting his fate.

Comigo moved to one side and held a brief council with

the other chiefs. Stern and unrelenting, they decided on Omoski's immediate execution.

Comigo, tomahawk in hand, advanced to deal the fatal blow.

"Before Comigo strikes, Omoski would speak for the white hunter. Spare him—let him go free! He has saved Omoski's life!"

Another council was held. It was decided that the young Indian's wish should be complied with.

"Now strike!" said the latter, facing his father. "Omoski is ready!"

Up went the tomahawk, when, with a shriek, Minnilo sprung forward and caught the old chief's arm.

There was also another interposition in the voice of KILLB'AR.

"See hyar! Jist hold on a minute, will yer? I ain't got much pity for Injuns ginerally, but thar's a feller-feller in my buzzum for Moscow hyar, sich as I never felt before! Thunder! It's Moscow's last day for seekin' the Red Bait, you say! Well, thar's time for him to try to reform himself yet, ef he wants ter, seein' as I'm the very chap he's arter, the great b'ar and Injun-fighter, DAVID CROCKETT!"

The effect of this announcement may be imagined. An animated conversation took place among the old chiefs, while Omoski's eyes lighted up as he remembered, and now accounted for, the wonderful skill which his white companion had shown on several occasions.

Finally Comigo, advancing toward the prisoner, said:

"The white-face tell many lie! How know speak truth?"

"Ker-whoop! Yer old skunk! do yer presume to doubt my word? Thar war a time when my word war as good as gold, and it are yet."

The Indians exchanged glances. It was evident that they still doubted the truth of the hunter's remark.

"The white man's word may be taken," said Omoski; "he has a big tongue, but he speaks truth now!"

"Thank ye, Moscow! That tongue of yours, like them of all Injuns, aren't very long of a certainty, else you'd hev tried to talk more messes to the white bird—the object of your affeckshuns!"

At mention of this, Omoski's face was shadowed by an expression of deep grief.

"The white bird is lost! Omoski never see again! She has left his heart very dark!"

"Come, Moscow, do try and get over that foolish passion! That's one way to do it, which are to roll over and over at the bottom of a river, for about two hours! Once I was desperately in love with a Dutch gal, whose mother wasn't at all favorable tew me. I was so all-fired in love with the gal, that when I swallowed a hot pertater once, which would hev burned me under ordinary circumstances, it felt as cold as a lump of ice!"

The Indians now held a consultation, after which Comigo advanced toward the hunter.

"Why call Killb'ar? 'Fraid of own name?"

"That's only one thing in creation that I are afraid of, and that are Suke Spoon."

"Why call Killb'ar, then?"

"That war one reason. I knowed Suke war after me, and so took a different name, that she wouldn't not track me. To use a classical compression, I preferred travelin' combs," (laughing)

"Why not tell Omoski you Red Bear?"

"Beyow I liked the fun o' the thing, war on a reason; and then again I war every day low and low inclined to fight with yerr Moscow, and wanted ter put it off, because the young Injin somehow won up on my feelin's! I couldn't b'ar the thought o' takin' his life!"

"If you Red Bear, got big scar under throat. Seminole chief once fight with you. Put knife in breast! White-faces come! Seminole run!"

"Thunder! that's a whoppin' lie! If you mean the 'Copper Kettle,' I kin jist tell yer that I was the only white-face around. We got into a scrimmage, and the 'Copper Kettle' began a-bilin' over, and before I knowed it, stuck his knife in my breast. I jist knocked him over the head with this 'ere rifle, when he jumped upon his horse, and in forty minits war t'other side of the mountains."

Comigo, now stooping, pulled aside the hunter's shirt and discovered the Seminole scar!

There could no longer be a doubt upon the subject; the prisoner was the renowned Crockett!

At this, the eyes of the old chief brightened. He would not have to take his son's life after all. Omoski had spared him yet the chance of redeeming his word.

"Omoski will fight the Red Deer now?"

"Yes," answered the young hunter, the old sparkling in his eyes. "But if Omoski falls, the Red Deer's scalp must remain untouched. No other hand than Omoski's shall take it. The white hunter must be set free!"

"Well done!" exclaimed Crockett. "You're a noble Indian, and it goes mightily arkin' me to take your word. But, ef we must fight, why the sooner the better, as I am in a hurry to get back to the settlement!"

The prisoner's arms were unbound. The chosen weapons were hunting-knives. The Indian formed a wide circle round the two, and at a given signal, the combat commenced.

Omoski aimed his blows mightily and skillfully, but so quick were the movements of Crockett that he avoided every thrust by nimble dodging. On several occasions he might have lured his knife in the young Indian's breast, but he seemed loth to do so.

Finally the two closed.

Omoski's match for wrestling had never been known among the red-men, but he now had to deal with one who would undo on the hug of a bear and had the advantage on the ground.

With one downward sweep of his body, Crockett secured the blade of Omoski's knife to the Indian's arm, seizing the Indian by the throat with one hand, and by the knee with the other, whirled him over his hip to the earth. Grasping the prostrate Indian by his scaly back, while with both hands pressing him to the ground, the hunter held his knife suspended above him, as if to show how easily he might take his life.

"Strike!" he usily cried the Indian. "Strike! I want to then live after this!" "Strike!"

"No! no!" cried Minniho. "No strike!"

Crockett thrust his knife in his belt.

"That, Moscow, you've committed your promise, and I'm perfectly satisfied too. You can get home now. I have say,

fought better than any Indian that I war ever engaged with. Ker-wah-up! cheer up, and don't be down-hearted!"

The Indian rose as Crockett released him. Both arms being sprained by his fall, lame as if broken by his side.

He gazed at Manito, in whose soft eyes, as well as in those of the other Indians, he read sadness and mortification at the result of the fight.

The girl evidently recalled the thoughts which were passing through his mind. She glided to his side, she laid both hands gently upon his arms, and looked up beseechingly into his face, smiling a bright, hopeful smile.

"Manito is still proud of Onoski!" she exclaimed, softly. "She will ever be proud of him."

The Indian half turned away.

"Come, Moscow?" exclaimed Kinkhar, "don't yer fret yer-self over what's happened! If I say it myself, I hev faked two red-skins at once in a fair, stand-up fight. Let that console yer. Yer kin know one thing, which might be a comfort, and that are that yer are the bravest of yer kind, and kin thrash any of the rest of the red-skins!"

Still, however, Onoski looked very as gloomy as before. He turned his glance wearily and, as if he would penetrate the dark arches of the forest and fix his eyes upon the white girl once more.

Meanwhile his father, with all the other warriors, stood apart, their glances fixed steadily upon the young man. The red prophet, meanwhile, had begun a low, mournful chant, which rang strangely through the woods. Onoski listened several moments, then took a few steps forward.

The weight of his misfortune, his loss of the white girl, his defeat, his absence from his brothers during their late battle with the whites, now came upon him with crushing force.

"Farewell! farewell!" he howled. "The Manitou spoke wrong! He said Onoski would win in the fight with the Red Bear!"

"Not so!" exclaimed Minnie, "it was not Manito who spoke to Onoski from the hollow tree. It was poor Minnie!"

"It matters little. Onoski's spirit is broken! He has

lost his heart. Farewell! He will never join his tribe again!"

So saying, the Indian turned, and rushing into the depths of the dark woods, soon was out of sight.

Minnihio followed him, her hair streaming, her eyes strangely wild, vainly calling upon him to come back.

Before the other Indians could imitate her example, one of their scouts came in reporting that a force of the cavalry now was scouring the woods.

Crockett advanced to meet them, while the Indians immediately left, making their way toward the Savannah. As the hunter hurried forward, he suddenly heard the cry of Minnihio on his right, as if for assistance. He hastened in the direction of the sound, and soon came upon a clearing in which the following scene met his sight. A couple of cavalrymen, evidently belonging to the same party which was advancing, had rushed at Omoski, and were now striking at him with their sabers. The young Indian had, when attacked, reached a small collection of thin trees, almost saplings, under which he now stood motionless, calmly and seemingly awaiting his fate. The saplings, however, prevented the sabers from hitting him. Meanwhile Minnihio was calling upon her tribe for assistance.

"Go back!" said Omoski to the soldiers. "Me come out, then can strike down soon as like. Omoski can looking for life!"

The horsemen, thinking this was a trick on his part to escape, still continued belaboring the trees. The Indian finally succeeded in disentangling himself and stepping out upon the clearing.

"There, Omoski ready now!" he said, fringing both men. "Kill quick!"

"No, ye won't do no sich thing! Her-wah-ah, Lill-bah!" exclaimed Killb'ar, now rushing forward.

The soldiers, who had raised their weapons, paused, as the hunter emerged to view.

"No, no, yer mustn't kill this 'ere red-skin!" exclaimed Killb'ar; "he are a different skunk from the kind you are used to, and are under my protection!"

"And who are you, friend?"

"DAVID CROCKETT, at yer sarvice. I intend j'ining yer army before long. Meanwhile you had better follow yer comrades, which are a good piece ahead of yer now."

"David Crockett?" exclaimed one of the soldiers, extending his hand; "are you really he?"

"Of course I am! Ther kin be no mistake about that, seein' as I oughter know myself."

"If you are," said the soldier, thrusting his hand in his pocket, "here is a letter for you. It was put into my hands by a woman as I was passing a cabin on the other side of the mountains. She said she was your wife."

Crockett took the letter, a joyful grin extending all over his face, and was soon deep in its contents. While he was reading it, Onuski made off, and so also did the two soldiers. When the hunter had finished his letter, he looked up to find himself alone.

"Well, this are sartinly an adventur' which I won't easily forget! I am mighty sorry for that poor Mowow, which was a good fighter for an Injun. Now, I s'pose I better git back to the settlement, ef I kin without attractin' the attention of Suke Spoon."

He finally arrived at the settlement, and sought the house of Lucy's uncle, where he was warmly received both by the young girl herself and by Mark Winters. The hunter's surprise at seeing this friend, apparently risen from the dead, may be imagined. On hearing Mark's story, he burst into a roar of laughter.

"Well, now, I kin say that almost beats the biggest adventur' I ever had in my life. I war once caught by Injuns and Laff learned. Before they burned me all up, I jist concluded to play devil, which might possibly save my life. Well, it did it, for I jist sucked the smoke and flame through my skin and then blowed it out of my mouth and nose, which war a perfect success, as it sent 'em all howlin' into the woods. Then I jist cut my bonds and made off a-sartin' as ef I would split!"

Two days later Mark Winters was married. Among the assembled guests was David Crockett, standing in a corner, leaning on his rifle and grinning from ear to ear. Suke Spoon had not troubled him since his return to the settlement, but

having concluded to go in search of him, had remained absent ever since.

What was the Hunter's consternation, however, toward the conclusion of the ceremony, to see enter the room, no less a personage than the formidable Sake, still carrying the knapsack containing the gridiron and pot.

The former article she unlatched, then placed herself in front of the dismayed hunter, catching him by the hair of the head, and drawing him toward the minister, both of the exhortations and cries of "Order!" all around her.

"Ker-whoop! yer decided looser! Jist yer come and marry me ter once, or I'll hev an awful satisfaction. Come along, come along! Thar never war sich a personted fiddle as me in the hull country! Hoop! hoop! hoop! Squirm and kick, will yer! I've found yer now, and yer got ter marry me!"

"Ginger and me!—no! of I do any I be shot! I'm married already. Thunder and lightning! Hiss and catch cats! dogs and bufflers! let go my hair, won't yer!"

"No, I won't! My affickshun is consumed on the subject! My heart is a-ba'stin' with mingled grief and indignation! How kin I let go yer hair under them circumstances?"

"Bar-r-r! whiz-z-z! Thunder! power! lightning! Yer'll hev my hair all out! Hoop! hoop! hoop! Hoop! How ther! clear the way, hyar's a live hunter comin'! Bar! bar! mind yerselves! Ker-roop! ker-roop! Look out thar! Boar! bar! Natings and hyin' paws! hyar goes! Ho-o-o-o! whoop!"

At the same moment something whizzed through the air like a cannon-ball and went bounding through the open window to the ground, a distance of twenty feet.

It was David Crockett, who, by means of a bundle of hair in the hands of loving Sake, had contrived to escape her iron grasp.

For a long time after, Sake searched for him but could not discover him. Finally, learning that he had joined the army of General Jackson, she had thoughts of enlisting as a soldier.

This idea was discouraged by her father, who, having built a new house, wanted Sake to live with him.

She obeyed, after much opposition, as a dutiful daughter should, and endeavored to quench her sorrows in manifold household duties.

Finally she married a half-breed trapper, who made her a good husband, as he was obliged to do under the management of such a powerful wife.

When the war was over, Crockett, being in Georgia, concluded to discover the fate of Onoski. He traveled many miles, as usual subsisting by his rifle, and sleeping when he felt for rest in hollow trees or upon the open plain. Finally he found himself in a deep forest in Florida. He walked a long distance, until near sundown, when he came to the edge of a gloomy, far-extending swamp. He was about turning back a short distance, when he beheld a pair of sharp eyes, peering at him from a thick mass of tangled shrubbery. At first he thought they were the eyes of some Indian, but he was undeceived by a low snarl, and the next moment a panther sprang forth with a bound, crouching within a few feet of him. Instantly Crockett, pointing his rifle, aimed directly for the eye of the monster. As the piece was discharged, however, the animal must have moved its head, for, although Crockett's aim was a sure one, the bullet merely grazed the top of the creature's skull. With a yell like that of a whole band of Indians, the panther now made a spring for Crockett, who, however, stopping nimbly to one side, avoided the animal's claws, and drove his hunting knife into its back. The animal had soon turned and made another spring at him. This time he was not as fortunate as before. The creature succeeded in planting its claws in his shoulder, and would probably the next moment have grasped his head in its enormous jaws, if a bullet from some hidden rifle, passing swiftly and quietly through the woods, had not hit the creature low!

Crockett rose to his feet, and glancing in the direction whence the shot had been fired to come, beheld the smoke of the piece ascending in the very center of the swamp. He leaped forward, and as the smoke cleared, caught a glimpse of a tall, thin figure, in full Indian garb, gliding like a phantom through the shadows of the thicket swamp.

"Well, now!" he exclaimed, "this are sartinly queer

enough, to save a man's life and then scamp off in such a manner as that! If I war the feller, I should surelly be glad to shake hands with him I'd saved!"

In the swamp there were a number of dry, lumpy projections.

"Hold on, thar?" continued Crockett, as he sprung from one to the other, "won't ye jist stop an' let me see yer face? Come, now, whar's the use of runnin' away in sich a fashion?"

He hurried on, and had nearly overtaken the strange form, which, although the back was turned, had a familiar look, when it suddenly vanished in a thick clump of shrubbery ahead. Crockett, however, sprung resolutely forward and pushed aside the bushes, to catch another glimpse of the receding figure, crawling on like a snake.

"Ker-whoop! hold on, thar! Whar are yer goin' to? Jist hold on one minit, an' let me know ef you ain't Omoski!"

There was no reply, and Crockett, hurrying on, soon arrived up on the shore of a dim lake, through which he beheld a canoe containing the tall figure, vanishing amid a group of black cypresses, growing out of the water!

Crockett, however, wading knee-deep, kept on, until he found himself over his neck, with darkness fast gathering round him, when he concluded that he had better retreat and seek some spot of land upon which he might pass the night.

A spot was soon gained, but it was far from being a dry one. The hunter spread his buffalo skin, nevertheless, and seated himself upon it. By and by the moon came up, its silver light strangely contrasting with the gloom of the swamp. Crockett rose, and threw a keen glance around him: but though he heard a distant voice.

He listened intently—the voice came nearer, and now he distinguished the words:

"Omoski! Omoski!"

He gazed in the direction of the sound, and, faintly revealed, like a distant phantom, he beheld, far away upon the lake, passing an instant over a long, narrow strip of marshland, athwart the water, the form of a girl, whose garb was so entirely that of an Indian, although the spectator could scarcely detect the outline of the robe.

"Ef that ain't Minnieho, who else kin it be?" muttered the

hunter. "Either she and Omoski are a-livin' together, or else she are still a-s'archin' and tryin' to win him to her. Love are sart'inly a powerful stimulator, when it plays sich pranks with a poor gal!"

He watched, hoping to see the female again, but he was not gratified.

Daylight came at last, and before sunrise Crockett had commenced searching the swamp thoroughly.

Vain the search. The swamp and lake were of such vast extent, and so filled with thick clumps of shrubbery, that he could discover no sign of those he had looked for.

Finally he returned to dry land, where he remained, before starting on the homeward route, for several days, but saw no more of the two figures, although he always would insist that they were Minniho's and Omoski's.

Other travelers, wandering hunters and trappers, for years afterward, would bring to the settlements reports of hearing, while passing a certain gloomy swamp, the plaintive cries as of a girl, pronouncing an Indian name.

The name was Omoski, and the girl was Minniho, still vainly calling upon her half-crazed Indian lover.

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